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The public relations studies section of the proceedings includes the following seven papers: "Ethical Inclinations of Public Relations Practitioners" (Cornelius B. Pratt); "Losing Control: An Examination of the Management Function in Public Relations" (Martha M. Lauzen); "Shifting the Public Relations Paradigm: A Theory of Donor Relations" (Kathleen S. Kelly); "Memory for Investor Relations Messages: An Information Processing Experiment" (Glen T. Cameron); "Models of Public Relations: A Review and Reconceptualization" (James E. Grunig and Larissa A. Grunig); "Public Relations News Releases and Libel: Extending First Amendment Protections" (Don Sneed and K. Tim Wulfemeyer); and "Public Relations and Mass Media: How Professionals in the Fields in Miami and New York View Public Relations Effects on Mass Media, Themselves, and Each Other" (Lynne M. Sallot). (SR)

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Ethical Inclinations of Public Relations Practitioners

(TOP FACULTY PAPER)

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Ethical Inclinations of Public Relations Practitioners

ABSTRACT

This study examines the reported ethical beliefs and behaviors of 307 practitioners (all members of the Public Relations Society of America) in the mid-Atlantic district of the United States, and compares their reported beliefs and behaviors with their reported perceptions of those of their peers and top management. Beliefs of top management are perceived as more ethical than those of both practitioners and peers, but top management is perceived as less likely to take disciplinary action against unethical behaviors. Among four demographic characteristics, age has the most significant relationship with self-reported ethical standards.

Ethical Inclinations of Public Relations Practitioners

The results of a recent nationwide survey of public relations practitioners indicated a major ethical concern: none of the respondents assigned very high marks to the honesty and ethical standards of practitioners.[1] In that survey, two other findings were apparent: (1) while 55 percent of respondents selected the chief executive as the most credible source of information about an organization, only 5 percent selected a public relations representative; and (2) the honesty and ethical standards of public relations practitioners were ranked fifth—after those of clergymen, TV reporters or commentators, journalists, and business executives.[2]

A similar survey of practitioners in the Washington, D.C., area indicated that, while most practitioners perceived themselves as ethical, they believed that people outside the profession perceived them as highly unethical.[3] In yet another survey, more than one-half of the respondents reported practitioners' "ethical and moral practices to be only fair at best."[4]

Even among undergraduate students, the degree of trust accorded public relations was lower than that accorded each of three other occupations: accounting, social work, and sales.[5] All of these results underscore the current national interest in ethics and explain why ethics is an important issue practitioners confront.[6]

Beyond public relations per se, interest in and questions about corporate ethics have increased[7] since the penny-press era of the 1800s and the public-be-damned era of the early decades of the present century. Particularly since the mid-1960s, corporations in general have been facing a decline in public confidence, which is reflected in an increase in anti-business sentiments and in the low ratings the public gives the ethical and moral practices of

corporate leaders." More recently, a downturn in public confidence has been spurred primarily by a plethora of such well-publicized incidents as:

- the controversial role of Union Carbide in the Bhopal, India, industrial tragedy of December 1984 that killed more than 2,500 residents and injured more than 200,000 others;
- the admission of E.F. Hutton & Company that it committed check-overdraft fraud between 1980 and 1982;
- the dismal handling by the A.H. Robins Company of the continuing controversies stemming from the Dalkon Shield intrauterine birth control device it marketed in the early 1970s;
- the conviction in 1987 of Ivan F. Boesky for insider-trading activities;
- the indictment in 1986 of officials of Beech-Nut Nutrition Corporation on charges that, between 1978 and 1983, they diluted apple juice for babies;
- the admission by Hertz Corporation in January 1988 that, during a seven-year period, it overcharged customers insurance companies $13 million for repairs to damaged rental cars;
- the indictment in January 1988 of Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., for illegally discharging, during a five-year period, inadequately treated water and other pollutants from its plant in Middleboro, Massachusetts, into the sewer system of Middleboro and into the Nemasket River and its wetlands;
- the dereliction of environmental responsibilities and the colossal failure by Exxon Corporation in its crisis management, following the March 1989 oil spill by its tanker, the Exxon Valdez, when it ran aground in Prince William Sound, off the coast of Alaska. This prompted a consortium of environmentalists and investment groups to create the Valdez Principles to help the public evaluate how the policies and practices of major U.S. corporations affect the environment."

These incidents exemplify a seeming lack of a strong ethical organizational conscience, lack of a strong organizational ethos, and lack of a demonstrated corporate social responsiveness. Consequently, a number of corporations, particularly those in high-profile industries, are adopting clear, written guidelines for ethical conduct; are exhorting their employees to attend ethics seminars continually; are appointing corporate ombudsmen to hear complaints of wrongdoing; are employing the services of ethicists to help stem the tide of questionable behaviors; and are integrating ethics into corporate culture.

However, the success of such organizational efforts is contingent on public relations practitioners who, as the consciences of their organizations, play an important organizational role in ethical leadership.[10] Practitioners can play such a role for five reasons. First, ideally, open, two-way symmetrical public relations practitioners strive to be the "standard bearers of corporate ethical initiatives,"[11] and tend to view their responsibility to society in general as more important than their responsibility to employer or client.[12] Second, business managers perceive ethics as crucial to, and as important aspects of, their professional work.[13] Third, business ethics is synonymous with practitioner ethics, and because corporations are expected to demonstrate commitment to social programs, the public relations role becomes all the more important in nurturing institutional ethical standards. Pearson emphasizes this point:

> Corporate public relations departments, to the extent that they are concerned with how a corporation communicates with its publics, are charged with the responsibility of managing the moral dimension of corporate conduct. . . . This is the core ethical responsibility of public relations from which all other obligations follow.[14]

Fourth, practitioners are best suited to raise business standards and to drive corporate behavior in response to public needs.[15] Finally, because they operate professionally at the interface (that is, by playing boundary-spanning and communication roles), their activities are most likely to be used as the benchmarks for public perceptions of organizational behavior. It is against this background that this study examines the ethics of practitioners.

Previous Research

To date, there is a paucity of empirical evidence on the ethics of public relations practitioners. As recently as 1982, empirical investigation into the ethics of practitioners was virtually non-existent, and the qualitative research on the subject was minuscule.[16] Even as recently as the spring of 1988, a Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) task force described only 16 journal articles and two books as the initial readings that dealt extensively with ethics issues in public relations.[17]

Only since 1984, when Ryan and Martinson published their seminal empirical work on subjectivism theory in public relations ethics,[18] and since 1985, when Wright surveyed the ethics of public relations practitioners,[19] has there been some interest in the subject.[20] The summer 1989 issue of Public Relations Review, for example, was the first such issue of a U.S. scholarly journal explicitly devoted to public relations ethics.[21]

Four published empirical studies on the ethics of U.S. practitioners indicated that:

- Practitioners responded differently to some of the same ethical situations, suggesting the presence of subjectivism as the prevailing moral-ethical theory in public relations and the absence of specific guidelines about acceptable or unacceptable behaviors.[23]
- In a comparison of the ratings of PRSA and non-PRSA members on five statements on ethics, PRSA members' ratings reflected their membership of the

organization and their subscription to its code of ethics, suggesting that PRSA members were more ethical than non-members.[22]

- Moderate to high levels of ethics in regard to basic morality, honesty and legal issues and relatively low scores for economic and religious morality were apparent among them.[24]

- Business executives, journalists or reporters were perceived as more credible than practitioners, and self-ratings of honesty and ethical standards of the practitioners were low.[27] Practitioners saw the ethical standards of their profession as less stringent than those of some other professions.

- Age had a progressive effect on moral values, with older practitioners (ages 36 through 66) holding stronger moral values than younger practitioners (ages 22 through 35).[25]

- Responsibility to society was perceived as more important than the practitioner's responsibility to an employer or client, suggesting that practitioners viewed their role to be that of a corporate conscience and that they would subordinate financial reward to social responsibility.[26]

Research Questions

Given the lack of base-line data on the ethical inclinations of practitioners toward potentially unethical situations in their organizations and their perceptions of the ethics of their peers and top management vis-a-vis those situations, this study examines five research questions:

1. What are the self-reported ethical beliefs and behaviors of practitioners about potentially unethical work-related activities?

2. What are the differences between such self-reported beliefs and behaviors and the perceptions of the ethical beliefs and behaviors of their peers?

3. What is the perceived likelihood that the top management of the practitioner's organization will take disciplinary action should an unethical behavior be discovered?

4. What are the relationships among practitioners' self-reported and perceived ethical beliefs and behaviors?

5. Finally, what effects do gender, PRSA accreditation, age, and annual base salary have on differences in practitioners' self-reported ethical inclinations?

Method

The Sample: Using a systematic random sampling procedure, 520 names of practitioners in the mid-Atlantic district (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington, D.C.) were selected from the 1989-1990 membership directory of PRSA in the fall of 1989. Academic and retired members were dropped from the sampling frame. The mid-Atlantic district was sampled because it included the Washington, D.C., area—a hub of the private- and government-sector public relations industry in the United States. Further, a limited sampling area was used because, given the resource limitation of this study, it was advisable to have a high response rate from a limited area rather than to have a scattering of responses from a larger area

Three hundred twenty-one questionnaires were returned in the single-wave mailing, yielding a 62 percent response rate; of that number, 307 (59 percent) were usable.

The Questionnaire: Bourke contends that, because ethics is not a descriptive social science, it does not identify variations of popular opinion on moral questions.[28] Rather, it offers an opportunity to study the absolute difference between right and wrong in human conduct and establishes definite norms, or rules, of behavior.[29] Bourke further asserts that the validity of such norms cannot be established by statistical procedures—for example, by popular surveys.[30]

However, in Wright's study of ethics of public relations practitioners, he posed the question: "Can ethical values be measured?"[31] The answer was a resounding yes, more so in light of the number of available scales that quantitatively measure such values. Beyond that, practitioners do not readily apply a fixed set of principles or deontological ethics—absolutes of right or wrong regardless of the consequences—to their work, but commonly apply

situation ethics,[32] which require gray-area considerations in their boundary roles. More than 30 years ago, Finn acknowledged differences in how practitioners rationalized the morality of their actions.[33] More recently, Ryan and Martinson's survey of practitioners indicated that subjectivism (or individual relativism) is the prevailing moral-ethical theory in public relations because practitioners respond in different ways to different moral-ethical dilemmas.[34] Wright underscores this problem:

> The field covers an extremely wide range of concerns forcing practitioners to act constantly, and in all sorts of situations. There is clouded judgment on questions of what's right or wrong; good or bad; ethical or unethical.[35]

Therefore, because " . . . the really difficult moral issues arise, not from a confrontation of good and evil, but from a collision between two goods,"[36] the measurement of practitioner ethics on a range of responses seems methodologically appropriate. A recent survey conducted by Doremus Porter Novelli, Washington, D.C., asked respondents to classify the ethics of the average public relations practitioner on a scale of one to seven, with 1 being highly ethical and 7 being not at all ethical.[37] Beyond practitioner ethics, Opinion Research Corporation has, since 1975, been using four-point scales to rate ethical practices in a variety of occupations and professions, further indicating the methodological appropriateness of measuring levels of ethics.[38] And Baumhart's classic study of the ethics of businessmen in 1966 measured ethical practices on seven-point scales, ranging from "absolutely unethical" to "absolutely ethical."[39] These measurement procedures are based on the fact that the U.S. public does not apply a single ethical standard to business behavior, but evaluates corporate ethics on a spectrum that ranges from ruthlessness to the golden rule.[40] Richard K. Long, director of corporate

communications for the Dow Chemical Company, clarifies this point from a systems perspective:

> It seems to me that institutions aren't ethical or unethical. A company or university, as such, isn't moral or immoral, forthright or shady. People within those entities determine how the institution is graded on propriety questions.[41] (Long's emphasis.)

The three-page, 78-item questionnaire employed in this present study was modeled on a 17-question instrument developed by Newstrom and Ruch[42] and used in previous studies.[43] Twelve of the original 17 items, which were all related to business, were used and some of the items were changed minimally to make them applicable to public relations.

The instrument consisted of 12 items in each of three belief and two behavioral situations, and 12 items concerning the likelihood that management would take disciplinary action should an unethical behavior be discovered. The 12 statements were repeated for each of the six situations, with the items rotated to minimize response bias.

The three belief situations asked about the practitioners' own beliefs, their perceptions of the ethical beliefs of their peers, and their perceptions of the ethical beliefs of their top management.

The belief and behavior situations and management's response to unethical situations were related to work habits and business practices such as taking longer than necessary to complete a job, calling in sick to take a day off, and falsifying time, quality, or quantity reports.

A final section of the questionnaire sought background information on the practitioners.

Practitioner beliefs were measured on five-point response categories, with 1 indicating very unethical and 5 indicating not at all unethical. The

frequency of ethical behaviors was also measured on five-point scales, ranging from 1 for never to 5 for at every opportunity.

The Design: A single-wave mail survey was used. A hand-typed and individually addressed covering letter and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope accompanied each questionnaire. To increase the possibility of questionnaire completion and return, respondents were assured anonymity and were asked not to include any personal identification on the questionnaires. Respondents were invited to request, under separate cover, a copy of the survey results.

Results

Profile of Respondents: Of the 307 respondents, 145 (47%) were female and 162 (53%) were male. Forty percent were 39 years old or younger, 26 percent were between 40 and 49 years old, 23 percent were between 50 and 59, about 8 percent were between 60 and 69, while 2 percent were 70 or older.

A majority (91 percent) had at least a bachelor's degree; about 31 percent had graduate degrees, with 1.6 percent reporting that they had doctoral degrees.

In regard to income, the percentages of practitioners in various income ranges were: 20 percent (n = 63) earned between $35,001 and $45,000; 17 percent ($n$ = 51) $25,001 and $35,000; 15 percent ($n$ = 45) $45,001 and $55,000; 12 percent ($n$ = 38) $55,001 and $65,000; 9 percent ($n$ = 28) $95,001 or more; 8 percent (n = 24) each between $65,001 and $75,000 and $75,001 and $85,000; about 6 percent (n = 19) $25,000 or less; and 5 percent (n = 15) between $85,001 and $95,000.

Twenty-nine percent (n = 88) were accredited in public relations (APR) while 1.3 percent (n = 4) were both APRs and accredited business communicators.

Comparisons of Beliefs: Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the three belief situations. In comparing respondents' belief

ratings (column 1) with those of their peers (column 2), we observe that, in every item, respondents rated their own beliefs to be more ethical than those perceived held by their peers. This finding confirms those of earlier studies that respondents tend to perceive peers as less ethical than themselves.[44] The standard deviations for Items 1 to 5 (column 1), the five belief items rated most ethical, are smaller than those for the other seven items, indicating greater ethical homogeneity for statements that are perceived as severe violations of business ethics.

The standard deviations for peers' beliefs are larger than those for "self," further indicating that there is less homogeneity in the perceptions of peers' beliefs than in the perceptions of self-beliefs.

Practitioners' mean scores (and standard deviations) for perceptions of management's beliefs (column 3) are in general similar to those of "self" (column 1) and unlike those of their peers (column 2).

Insert Table 1 about here

Divulging confidential information to a competitor was perceived as the most highly unethical belief item for all three situations. The mean score (1.09) for practitioners' beliefs was not statistically different from that of their perceptions of management's beliefs (1.13). Both scores were, however, significantly lower ($p < .0001$) than that of their perceptions of peers' beliefs (1.35).

The mean score for practitioners' beliefs on padding an expense account by more than 10% was also not significantly different from the mean score for management's beliefs; both scores were significantly different ($p < .0001$) from the perceptions of peers' beliefs.

Practitioners also had low mean scores concerning their own beliefs on the falsification of time, quality, and quantity reports and for the acceptance of gifts or favors in exchange for preferential treatment. For both statements, peers had the highest ($p < .0001$) mean scores—indicating that practitioners perceived the ethical beliefs of their peers as the least ethical.

For Item 6 ("Taking longer than necessary to complete a job"), mean scores for practitioners' perceptions and their perceptions of management's beliefs were not significantly different and were, again, significantly lower ($p < .0001$) than the mean score for the perceptions of peers' beliefs.

Item 9 ("Not reporting others' possible violations of PRSA ethics code") is the only statement on which respondents perceived both their peers' and management's beliefs as almost even, with the mean score (2.40) for practitioners being significantly lower ($p < .0001$) than the other two (2.79 for peers; 2.75 for management).

Practitioners rated the use of an organization's services or equipment for personal use and the taking of extra personal time during business hours as the least unethical. It is plausible that the high mean scores for both these items reflect some practitioners' occasional use of their personal resources for company work and their conduct of company business after normal business hours, if necessary, to make up for lost productivity.

Comparisons of Behaviors/Likelihood of Management's Action: All the mean scores for how often practitioners reported that they practiced unethical behaviors were significantly lower ($p < .0001$) than those for both peers and for the likelihood that management would take disciplinary action should such behaviors be discovered. In essence, then, this means that practitioners perceived their ethical behaviors to be higher than those of both their peers and management. Only in three statements (Items 1, 4 and 7) did the

practitioners tend almost to equate peers' and management's behavioral standards.

Practitioners, on the one hand, most likely used and most likely perceived that their peers used organizations' services and equipment for personal use. On the other hand, they most likely perceived top management as not taking disciplinary action when practitioners failed to report others' possible violations of PRSA code of ethics. The grand mean of 2.58 for all 12 statements indicates a perceived likelihood that top management is less likely to take disciplinary action for an ethical infraction. This is consistent with a recent finding among respondents in middle- and top-management levels who, when faced with corrupt situations, were less likely to take legal action or dismiss the guilty party than to issue warnings or even do nothing about them.[45]

Perceptual Scores: Because responses within each situation were substantially intercorrelated, summary scores were computed by averaging each practitioner's responses concerning each situation. These means are shown in Table 2, along with the corresponding coefficient alphas, whose reasonably high values, ranging from .76 to .85, confirm the appropriateness of the averaging process for the purpose of this study.

Insert Table 2 about here

A repeated measures analysis of variance was undertaken to evaluate differences across the three belief situation (grand) means. The results across the three situation beliefs show significant ($p < .0001$) differences; post-hoc comparisons of differences between the three pairs of grand means were also significant ($p < .0001$). Similarly, the two behavior grand means were significantly different ($p < .0001$) from each other.

Belief-Behavior Relationships: Correlation coefficients among all six belief and behavior situations are presented in Table 2. The three highest intercorrelations are among the three belief situations: Practitioners' and management's beliefs (r = .66, p < .001); practitioners' and peers' beliefs (r = .63, p < .001); and peers' and management's beliefs (r = .58, p < .001).

Among the three behavioral situations, the strongest correlation is between practitioners' and peers' behaviors (r = .54, p < .001). Moderate correlation coefficients are found among belief and behavior situations. Practitioners' beliefs are related to their behaviors (r = .55, p < .001); and management's beliefs are related to management's likelihood of taking disciplinary action (r = .54, p < .001). However, while practitioners' beliefs are moderately related to their perceptions of management's actions (r = .49), their behaviors have little relationship (r = .29) with their perceptions of what management's disciplinary action might be. The difference between these two coefficients (.49 and .29) is highly significant (t = 4.21, p < .00001).

In sum, while all six situations, on the one hand, show moderate correlations on the diagonals of the matrices, indicating moderate relationships between beliefs and behaviors, the correlated variables that lie outside the diagonals of the matrices also indicate moderate relationships between "self" and perceived beliefs and behavior of peers. The lowest correlation, on the other hand, indicates the reverse for practitioners' behaviors and the likelihood of management taking action. Of all six situations, the likelihood of management taking action has its strongest correlation (r = .54) with perceived management's beliefs.

Ethical Differences and Practitioners' Demographic Characteristics: Four dichotomous variables were established to reflect practitioner characteristics: gender (male and female); PRSA accreditation; age (39 years old and younger,

40 years old and older); and annual base salary ($45,000 or less, $45,001 or more). These variables were used to split the sample for computation of independent two-tailed t tests, comparing the means of the six situation variables across each grouping. Results are shown in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

Female practitioners' beliefs were significantly more ethical than those of their male counterparts ($t = -2.30$, $p < .05$). Women also reported that they practiced unethical behaviors less often than men ($t = 2.45$, $p < .01$). Such significant differences suggest that male and female practitioners have different ethical beliefs and behaviors.

For two other situations, women and men had about the same mean scores for their perceptions of the ethical beliefs and of the ethical behaviors of their peers. Women's perceptions of management's beliefs and of the likelihood of management's actions were slightly different from those of men. While these limited differences reflect the variability of evidence on gender differences in moral inclinations,[46] similar research indicates limited or lack of differences.[47]

PRSA accreditation, for the most part, did not account for major differences between the perceptions of accredited and non-accredited practitioners. It was only on the perception of peers' beliefs that accreditation appeared to make a difference: accredited practitioners perceived their peers' ethical beliefs as more ethical than did non-accredited practitioners ($t = 2.16$, $p < .05$). This result is telling in that accredited practitioners, who have pledged to uphold PRSA's code of ethics, apparently

perceived their peers as also holding higher ethical values than peers' values as perceived by non-accredited practitioners.

Age had the strongest overall effect on ethical orientations, particularly for practitioners' beliefs and the likelihood of management taking action, indicating that younger practitioners tended to play by different ethical rules. The older (40 years or older) practitioners had significantly lower grand mean scores in four of the six situations. Even in the two situations in which non-significant _t_'s were observed, older practitioners' mean scores were lower than those of younger (39 years or younger) practitioners. In general, this result is consistent with Wright's "contention that age has a progressive effect on moral values among public relations practitioners."[48] Outside the public relations setting, age differences have been reported in stages of moral development across the life-span,[49] and have been identified as having greater effects on the ethical perceptions of middle-level managers than place of education or location of employment, whether in a local or multinational corporation.[50]

Similarly, a recent nationwide study of managerial and professional business personnel indicated a generation gap in business ethics: younger respondents were significantly more permissive than older respondents in their views on ethics in a wide variety of situations.[51]

The final independent variable examined _vis-a-vis_ ethics was annual base salary. Even though no significant differences were found between "higher-income" and "lower-income" practitioners on the three belief situations, all three grand mean scores for the former group were lower than those for the latter. Similarly, for the two behavior situations and the likelihood of management's action, the scores for the "higher-income" practitioners were lower. These results may suggest that, among practitioners,

higher incomes tend to be associated with self-reports of higher ethical standards.

Although gender, age, and annual base salary were the only demographic characteristics for which a number of significant *t* tests resulted, there was the possibility that these and the other demographic variable might interact with each other to explain significant amounts of variance. A crossed design involving all of the demographic characteristics was not possible because of sample size. Instead, six two-way ANOVA designs were adopted, pairing each of the four demographic variables: Gender x Accreditation, Gender x Age, Gender x Annual Base Salary, Accreditation x Age, Accreditation x Annual Base Salary, and Age x Annual Base Salary. Each of the six dependent situation variables was entered into each of these six designs, for a total of 36 analyses. The number of analyses might have been reduced to 18 by combining the three dependent belief variables in six MANOVAs and the two behavior dependent variables in another six MANOVAs (leaving six ANOVAs on management's beliefs). This approach was not taken because this phase of the analysis was viewed as largely descriptive in spirit, the goal being to locate unusual aspects of a large and complex body of data.

While there were some statistically significant main effects because of gender and age, there were no statistically significant Age x Gender interactions. Three uninterpretable interactions were significant: Age x Income for peers' beliefs ($F = 2.97$, $df = 7$, $p < .01$); Age x Accreditation for practitioners' behaviors ($F = 4.09$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$); and Gender x Income for management's beliefs ($F = 2.06$, $df = 8$, $p < .05$).

The analyses used in the present study involved a number of tests of significance, so it is important to consider the possibility for Type I errors. In this regard, it may be noted that, for a nominal significance level of, say,

.05, there were many more significant results than might be expected to arise by chance. This outcome does not preclude the fact that one or more of them may have been the result of chance, but does suggest that most of them are valid. Moreover, most of the significant results were consistent with each other and were obtained with respect to a small number of independent variables. Thus, one might tend to discount, for example, one or more of the statistically significant interactions with gender or income referred to above. On the other hand, the recurring significant results with respect to age and gender should, indeed, be taken as representative of the population represented by the sample.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored the ethical beliefs and behaviors of and differences among a sample of 307 public relations practitioners in the mid-Atlantic district. It also investigated the extent to which the practitioners perceived their management as thinking ethically and how likely such management was to discipline practitioners who engaged in unethical practices. Table 1 shows that the practitioners have high ratings of their own belief and behaviors and of management's beliefs. Results also indicate significant differences between pairs of grand means: (1) practitioners' beliefs are perceived as more ethical than those of their peers, (2) practitioners' beliefs are less ethical than those of management, (3) peers' beliefs are less ethical than those of top management, (4) practitioners' behaviors are more ethical than those of their peers, (5) practitioners' beliefs indicate lower ethical standards than their behaviors, (6) peers' beliefs indicate lower ethical standards than their behaviors, (7) management's beliefs are less ethical than practitioners' behaviors.

There is a general perception that the more ethical management's beliefs are, the more likely management will take disciplinary action should an unethical behavior be identified. However, while top management's beliefs were perceived as the most ethical, management was also perceived as somewhat less likely to take action (grand mean = 2.58 on a five-point scale, with 1 being very likely and 5 being not at all likely). An implication of these results is that practitioners operate in organizational environments whose perceived ethical standards are higher than those of employees, but whose actions against the violation of ethical practices were perceived as muted. This evidence of the perceived ethical superiority of top management may imply a perceptual expectation that top management (and the corporate polity) expend considerable effort in nurturing and demonstrating high ethical standards in the workplace.

Moderate intercorrelations are found between belief pairs, between behavior pairs and between belief and behavior pairs, with the strongest such correlation occurring between practitioners' and management's beliefs. The moderate correlations between belief and behavior pairs indicate that practitioners differentiate their self-reported behaviors from their self-reported beliefs.

This study supports Wright's claims on age differences.[52] The implication of these age differences is that older practitioners may assume the responsibility of guiding younger practitioners in their understanding of what constitutes the "rightness" or "wrongness" of an act or decision. As Longenecker, et al. reported, "senior managers can no longer assume that younger managers and professionals are similar in their ethical views to the cadre of middle-aged or older managers with whom they have most contact."[53]

Finally, this study also builds on Wright's study by providing preliminary affirmative evidence on the main effects of gender, accreditation and income

on practitioner ethics. The significant t values and correlations seem, therefore, to justify future research on the predictors of practitioner ethics. Such future directions would be important for understanding the perceptual bases of moral reasoning among practitioners—males and females alike.

Before accepting these findings, however, it is important to consider three caveats. First, aside from the fact that all the 12 statements used are not public relations-specific, they do not provide comprehensive measures of the various types of potentially unethical beliefs and behaviors in the workplace. For one thing, the very nature of public relations requires that practitioners "must deal with too many ethics. We have our own ethics, our client's ethics, and sets of ethics for communicating with specific publics."[54] For another, because public relations practitioners are involved in a broad range of organizational activities and serve as boundary-spanners, the statements used in this study are but a modest number compared to some of the situations that they are traditionally exposed to in organizational settings.

Second, even though practitioners were randomly selected from the mid-Atlantic district, it is possible that the special geographic characteristics of those who responded to the survey may preclude generalizations to the universe of public relations practitioners. Further, because the activities of PRSA members are influenced by a "Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations" to which most members adhere,[55] it is likely that members' perceptions of ethics may not be typical of those of the general practitioner population, which is much larger than the membership of PRSA. (Fewer than one in 15 public relations practitioners in the United States is a members of PRSA.) Replication on a nationwide sample is needed to determine the extent to which the results of such a study are consistent with those of the present study.

Finally, the use of self-report measures, which have a potential for eliciting socially desirable responses to questions on ethics, could compromise the value of our findings. Perceptual distortion is higher when the relevant dependent construct is as highly valued as ethics is, and decreases when it is considered trivial.[56] Self-report measures, without independent verification, are potentially subject to distortion because of lying, defensiveness, and social desirability.[57] If, for example, someone were a liar, why should we expect him or her to give truthful answers to questions on ethics.[58] Perhaps the use of on-the-job observation of performance or other direct measures of ethical beliefs and behaviors may reveal more substantive results. However, because participation was voluntary and anonymous, with no second-wave mailing, there is reason to expect that respondents provided honest answers to the questions.

These limitations aside, the present study suggests that the increasing institutionalization (and awareness) of ethics in business may be bearing some fruit—more so at the perceptual and cross-perceptual levels. If, as this study generally suggests, there is <u>not</u> a self-reported ethics problem among practitioners, and if the latter's perceptions are truly indicative of the presence of high "self" and high organizational ethical values, then opportunities exist for further integrating ethics into organizational culture. Practitioners can help "bring new standards of ethics and ethical behavior to the business world [and] can enhance the reputation of all business, because the deeds will match the words [self-reports]."[59] To the extent that practitioners perceive their peers as the least ethical and their top management as holding high ethical values, but somewhat lacking in punishing practitioners for unethical behaviors, it is important that practitioners, as the epitome of organizational conscience and with impressively high ratings of their own

ethical beliefs and behaviors, guide institutional efforts toward an improved management's sense of appropriate response to unethical conduct. This prospect raises a long-standing companion question: Should top management, of which practitioners are a part, play a leading role in establishing and influencing practitioner ethics?

Recent studies have reported that the public relations practice is influenced by several variables, including organizational structure, technology, top management support and understanding of public relations, representation of public relations in an organization's dominant coalition, openness of the organizational system, concern for the public interest, and the dominant public relations model in use.[60] In a nationwide study of U.S. business ethics conducted by Brenner and Molander, respondents reported that the behavior of one's superiors was a primary influence on the making of unethical decisions.[61] Similarly, Jackall[62] and Epstein[63] observed that the ethical sensitivities and proclivities of corporate bureaucracy (that is, of top management), and, more specifically, of the CEO, shape the ethos of a corporation not only in matters of individual success and failure but also in day-to-day issues that managers face. Further, research among marketing practitioners indicates that the existence and enforcement of corporate policy on ethics in the workplace appear to be positively associated with the reporting of high ethical standards.[64] Thus, future studies could investigate differences in ethics among practitioners in different organizational settings, identifying whether such differences result from the type of organizations the practitioners work for, result from the dominant ethics in the workplace, or result from the dominant public relations models in different organizational environments.

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TABLE 1

Item Means (and Standard Deviations) for Practitioner Perceptions of Statements on Ethics in Six Belief and Behavior Situations

Statement	Situations					
	Ethical Beliefs			Ethical Behaviors		
	Practitioners' Beliefs[a]	Peers' Beliefs[a]	Management's Beliefs[a]	Practitioners' Behaviors[b]	Peers' Behaviors[b]	Likelihood of Management's Action[c]
1. Divulging confidential information to a competitor.	1.09 (.32)	1.35 (.71)	1.13 (.43)	1.10 (.39)	1.45 (.65)	1.45 (.90)
2. Padding an expense account by more than 10%.	1.29 (.53)	1.89 (.97)	1.36 (.71)	1.09 (.36)	1.83 (.78)	1.59 (.96)
3. Falsifying time/quality/quantity reports.	1.30 (.58)	1.94 (.95)	1.47 (.82)	1.23 (.53)	1.95 (.84)	2.11 (1.15)
4. Accepting gifts or favors in exchange for preferential treatment.	1.40 (.71)	2.00 (1.01)	1.54 (.83)	1.27 (.56)	1.90 (.78)	1.85 (1.13)
5. Padding an expense account by up to 10%.	1.54 (.79)	2.28 (1.21)	1.51 (.79)	1.30 (.66)	2.08 (.99)	1.84 (1.10)

Table 1 continues

Table 1 (continued)

Statement	Situations: Ethical Beliefs — Practitioners' Beliefs[a]	Ethical Beliefs — Peers' Beliefs[a]	Ethical Beliefs — Management's Beliefs[a]	Ethical Behaviors — Practitioners' Behaviors[b]	Ethical Behaviors — Peers' Behaviors[b]	Likelihood of Management's Action[c]
6. Taking longer than necessary to complete a job.	2.21 (1.09)	2.47 (1.01)	2.12 1.02)	1.67 (.69)	2.22 (.80)	3.03 (1.13)
7. Concealing one's errors.	2.31 (.99)	2.72 (1.10)	2.06 (.99)	1.72 (.68)	2.51 (.82)	2.58 (1.14)
8. Calling in sick to take a day off.	2.34 (1.13)	2.97 (1.18)	2.03 (.99)	1.46 (.70)	2.42 (.79)	3.04 (1.23)
9. Not reporting others' possible violations of PRSA ethics code.	2.40 (1.01)	2.79 (1.13)	2.75 (1.27)	1.80 (1.13)	2.34 (1.12)	3.93 (1.40)
10. Doing personal business on organization's time.	2.62 (1.07)	3.04 (1.08)	2.35 (1.06)	2.25 (.69)	2.67 (.85)	3.16 (1.10)
11. Using organization's services or equipment for personal use.	2.79 (1.04)	3.08 (1.13)	2.28 (1.06)	2.27 (.78)	2.70 (.87)	3.14 (1.15)

Table 1 continues

Table 1 (continued)

Statement	Situations					
	Ethical Beliefs			Ethical Behaviors		
	Practitioners' Beliefs[a]	Peers' Beliefs[a]	Management's Beliefs[a]	Practitioners' Behaviors[b]	Peers' Behaviors[b]	Likelihood of Management's Action[c]
12. Taking extra personal time—lunch hours, breaks, early departures, etc.	2.94 (1.11)	3.13 (1.04)	2.42 (1.12)	2.17 (.80)	2.67 (.84)	3.22 (1.14)
Grand Mean	2.02 (.53)	2.47 (.71)	1.92 (.58)	1.61 (.36)	2.23 (.57)	2.58 (.70)

[a] A score of 1 on the original scale represented "very unethical," while 5 represented "not at all unethical." A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[b] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that respondents practiced the behavior "at every opportunity," while a 1 indicated that it was "never" practiced. A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[c] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that it was "not at all likely" while a 1 indicated that it was "very likely" that top management would take disciplinary action should each behavior be discovered.

TABLE 2

Grand Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficient Alphas and Matrix of Intercorrelations Among Grand Means of Twelve Statements on Ethics in Six Belief and Behavior Situations

				Situations					
				Ethical Beliefs			Ethical Behaviors		
Situations	Grand Mean	SD	Coefficient Alpha	Practitioners' Beliefs	Peers' Beliefs	Management's Beliefs	Practitioners' Behaviors	Peers' Behaviors	Likelihood of Management's Action
1. Practitioners' Beliefs	2.02[a]	.53	.824						
2. Peers' Beliefs	2.47[a]	.71	.890	.63					
3. Management's Beliefs	1.92[a]	.58	.850	.66	.58				
4. Practitioners' Behaviors	1.61[b]	.36	.765	.55	.36	.40			
5. Peers' Behaviors	2.23[b]	.57	.892	.41	.58	.34	.54		
6. Likelihood of Management's Action	2.58[c]	.70	.854	.49	.46	.54	.29	.36	

Table 2 continues

Table 2 (continued)

[a] A score of 1 on the original scale represented "very unethical," while 5 represented "not at all unethical." A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[b] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that respondents practiced the behavior "at every opportunity," while a 1 indicated that it was "never" practiced. A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[c] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that it was "not at all likely" while a 1 indicated that it was "very likely" that top management would take disciplinary action should each behavior be discovered.

TABLE 3

Grand Means, (Standard Deviations) and Values of t for All Twelve Statements on Ethics in Six Belief and Behavior Situations, by Gender, PRSA Accreditation, Age and Annual Base Salary

		Situations					
		Ethical Beliefs			Ethical Behaviors		
Variable	n	Practitioners' Beliefs[a]	Peers' Beliefs[a]	Management's Beliefs[a]	Practitioners' Behaviors[b]	Peers' Behaviors[b]	Likelihood of Management's Action[c]
Gender							
Female	(n = 145)	1.94 (.49)	2.47 (.73)	1.86 (.57)	1.55 (.30)	2.22 (.60)	2.63 (.71)
Male	(n = 162)	2.08 (.55)	2.47 (.69)	1.97 (.58)	1.66 (.41)	2.24 (.55)	2.53 (.69)
t		-2.30*	.00	-1.69	-2.45**	-.35	1.22
PRSA Accreditation							
PRSA Accredited	(n = 88)	1.93 (.53)	2.34 (.76)	1.93 (.58)	1.63 (.45)	2.23 (.61)	2.52 (.76)
Not Accredited	(n = 219)	2.05 (.53)	2.53 (.68)	1.92 (.59)	1.60 (.32)	2.23 (.56)	2.60 (.67)
t		1.85	2.16*	.22	.53	.04	.87

Table 3 continues

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	n	Situations: Ethical Beliefs — Practitioners' Beliefs[a]	Ethical Beliefs — Peers' Beliefs[a]	Ethical Beliefs — Management's Beliefs[a]	Ethical Behaviors — Practitioners' Behaviors[b]	Ethical Behaviors — Peers' Behaviors[b]	Likelihood of Management's Action[c]
Age							
39 Years or Younger	(n = 124)	2.15 (.53)	2.61 (.71)	1.98 (.62)	1.66 (.34)	2.32 (.52)	2.79 (.67)
40 Years or Older	(n = 183)	1.93 (.50)	2.38 (.71)	1.88 (.56)	1.58 (.37)	2.17 (.61)	2.44 (.69)
t		3.78***	2.78**	1.50	1.86	2.19*	4.45***
Annual Base Salary							
$45,000 or less	(n = 133)	2.07 (.52)	2.56 (.72)	1.97 (.64)	1.66 (.37)	2.31 (.58)	2.77 (.69)
$45,001 or higher	(n = 174)	1.97 (.53)	2.41 (.70)	1.88 (.53)	1.57 (.35)	2.17 (.57)	2.43 (.67)
t		1.61	1.81	1.43	2.04*	2.05*	4.43***

Table 3 continues

Table 3 (continued)

[a] A score of 1 on the original scale represented "very unethical," while 5 represented "not at all unethical." A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[b] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that respondents practiced the behavior "at every opportunity," while a 1 indicated that it was "never" practiced. A lower mean score, therefore, indicates a higher ethical inclination.

[c] A score of 5 on the original scale indicated that it was "not at all likely" while a 1 indicated that it was "very likely" that top management would take disciplinary action should each behavior be discovered.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

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Losing Control:
An Examination of the Management Function in Public Relations

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This study presents the findings of an exploratory study of encroachment -- the assignment of non-public relations professionals to the public relations manager role. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 public relations managers in San Diego, CA to explore the reasons leading to encroachment. From the information gathered in the interviews, a theoretical model of encroachment was constructed. The model suggests that role sent, role aspirations and role competencies determine the role enacted by practitioners. Role enacted, in turn, determines whether public relations is perceived as a function of primary or secondary importance to the organization. How the function is perceived then influences whether encroachment occurs. Two factors external to public relations -- marketing imperialism and organizational turbulence -- also influence levels of encroachment.

Losing Control:

An Examination of the Management Function in Public Relations

Management positions in public relations are often held by individuals without training or experience in public relations. Lindenmann and Lapetina (1981) found that top public relations positions "are often being filled by accountants or other financial experts, by lawyers, economists, engineers, sales managers and other personnel who have no formal background in public relations" (p. 12). Lesly (1988) adds MBAs to this list. The assignment of non-public relations professionals to the public relations manager role is called encroachment (Dozier, 1988) and is an issue of growing concern to public relations practitioners and scholars (PR Reporter, 1984; Lesly, 1988).

This study is the first in a program of research on encroachment in public relations. In this study, exploratory interviews were conducted with 16 public relations managers in San Diego, CA. Factors leading to encroachment, both internal and external to public relations, were analyzed. Findings suggest a theoretical model explaining encroachment.

Theoretical Presuppositions

A grounded theoretic approach was used in this exploratory study. The purpose was to discover theory (see Figure 1), not test hypotheses. However, the research was not conducted in a vacuum. A core presupposition of this study is that encroachment is either accelerated or impeded by factors both internal and external to the field.

Internal Factors

Two internal reasons for encroachment include technician role aspirations and a lack of manager competencies among public relations practitioners.

Technician Role Aspirations. Roles are sets of behaviors and given positions within social systems (Berlo, 1960). Biddle and Thomas (1966) state that roles are determined "by social norms, demands, and rules; by the role performances of others in their respective positions; by those who observe and react to the performance; and by the individual's particular capabilities and personality" (p. 4).

Katz and Kahn (1966) distinguish between role sent and role received in organizations. When a set of expectations is communicated to a focal person, that set becomes the role sent. The role received, on the other hand, consists of the focal person's perceptions and cognitions of what was communicated. Role enacted is the behavior resulting from those cognitions.

The public relations roles that practitioners enact have been extensively analyzed by Broom (1980, 1982) and Dozier (1983, 1984, 1986, 1987). Broom found that three conceptual roles were intercorrelated: expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator, and communication facilitator. These roles were not correlated with a fourth role, that of communication technician. On the basis of this analysis and subsequent factor analysis of several practitioner role surveys, Dozier (1983) collapsed Broom's four roles into two roles. Dozier found that public relations practitioners could be classified as managers or as technicians. According to Dozier (1987),

> Managers make policy decisions and are held accountable for public relations program outcomes. They view themselves and are viewed by others in the organization as public relations experts. They facilitate communication between management and publics and guide management through a rational public relations problem-solving process. (p. 13)

Public relations technicians, on the other hand, "carry out the low-level mechanics of generating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others" (p. 14).

The role that a practitioner chooses to enact is determined, in part, by his or her aspirations. Practitioner role aspirations are the psychological predispositions practitioners feel toward certain public relations activities. Public relations practitioners find certain activities to be attractive and are thus drawn to them. A study by Dozier and Gottesman (1982) examined practitioner's public relations activities and aspirations using a 60-item Q-sort methodology. They found that not all practitioners possess manager aspirations. One type of practitioner, labeled the "creative artistic" practitioner strongly agreed with the statement, "Creativity is a very important aspect of public relations; PR will suffer under a strict scientific approach" (p. 17). These practitioners avoid the activities associated with the manager role, such as managing people or decisions. Even when promoted to the manager level, some practitioners continue to enact the technician role, enmeshed in the technical aspects of communication production while strategic issues are ignored. On the other hand, "committed proactive" practitioners strongly agreed with the statement, "Unfortunately, most PR practitioners are communication technicians. They see their skills beginning and ending with journalistic skills" (p. 20). "Literary scientific" practitioners strongly agreed with the statement, "PR is best approached as a rational process that breaks down into a series of logical steps" (p. 21). These practitioners are attracted to activities engaged in by managers and are thus more likely to enact the manager role. As a result, a "managerial vacuum" is created in the public relations department and encroachment is more likely to occur.

Lack of Manager Competencies. Manager competencies are the behavioral skills necessary to engage in those activities that constitute the public relations manager role. These skills are acquired through formal education and experience and include knowledge of and experience with strategic planning and issues management. Without these competencies, the practitioner is ill-equipped to enact the manager role.

Research suggests that many practitioners do not possess the competencies necessary to fulfill the manager role. Wright (1979) notes that many practitioners resist the accountability managers are subjected to "because they were artists rather than managers." Dozier (1981) argues that practitioners who "narrowly define themselves as artizans of the inverted pyramid" are ill equipped for demands placed on public relations managers.

External Factors

Three factors external to public relations accelerate encroachment. First, public relations practitioners are viewed by top managers as lacking essential manager competencies. Second, top managers are confused about what public relations is and what it can do. Third, marketing personnel are aggressively expanding their function in organizations by taking over what have traditionally been public relations activities.

Perceived Lack of Manager Competencies. Top management's view of public relations practitioners is less than favorable. A 1980 Gallup study found fewer than one in six chief executives of major corporations expressed satisfaction with the performance of public relations specialists. They labeled public relations professionals as "intellectually lazy" with "an inadequate knowledge of business and an exaggerated sense of their own importance" (WSJ, 1980, sec. 2).

Lindenmann and Lapetina (1981) asked managers to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of public relations practitioners. Although managers indicated several positive aspects of public relations practitioners, these same managers also noted that practitioners

> . . . often lack a comprehensive understanding of the social, political and business problems and issues about which they are forced to write and counsel; they are often seen as having poor relationships with the media; and they are often seen as lacking input with senior management chiefly because they adopt a role more as implementers of policy rather than as shapers and molders of policy. (p. 8).

Lindenmann and Lapetina concluded that public relations professionals are viewed as failing to assume broad decision-making roles. If public relations practitioners are perceived by top managers as being incompetent, the likelihood that non-public relations professionals will be placed in manager roles increases.

Confusion. It is not surprising that when those inside a field have trouble defining "what they do," those outside the discipline will experience a good amount of confusion as well. In an attempt to arrive at a single definition, Harlow (1976) collected 472 definitions of public relations. The diversity of these definitions provides evidence of the confusion within the field. This internal uncertainty causes confusion outside the discipline. According to Wood (1988),

> I've met many a CEO who didn't know exactly what his or her own PR people were doing or what they could be asked to do. Often a CEO will inherit a public-relations staff from a previous CEO -- and let the potentially good staff sit, barely or inadequately used, or used for the wrong assignments. (p. xiii)

When top managers in organizations are unsure about what public relations is and what it can do, individuals from almost any discipline can be considered qualified to fulfill the public relations manager role. Thus, encroachment is more likely to occur when top managers do not understand the public relations function.

Marketing Imperialism. Marketing imperialism is the expansion of the marketing function into domains or areas traditionally regarded as public relations (Ehling, 1989). Marketers developed the concept of "megamarketing" (Kotler, 1986) to describe what public relations researchers call marketing imperialism. According to Kotler, megamarketing is a strategic thinking process whereby barriers to "blocked or protected markets" are overcome by supplementing the four ps of marketing -- product, price, place, and promotion -- with power and public relations. In Kotler's schema, public relations practitioners are specialists used by marketing managers to plan and implement megamarketing programs. Kotler acknowledges potential opposition to "this enlarged view of marketing" because it "impinges on the responsibilities of nonmarketing executives" (pp. 123-124). According to Broom and Tucker (1988), increasing numbers of marketers are aggressively expanding their sphere of influence. As public relations practitioners have failed to manage the public relations function, marketers have claimed many public relations activities as their own, eventually managing the public relations department.

Methodology

Together, these internal and external factors were discussed in a series of depth interviews with public relations managers in 16 organizations in San Diego, CA. A qualitative research technique -- the depth interview -- was used to explore the reasons leading to encroachment. The findings and

the model reported here are tentative and should be tested using more rigorous, large-sample quantitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Sixteen public relations managers were interviewed over a two-month period in 1988. Individuals were considered managers if they had "manager," "vice president" or "director" in their job titles. In some cases, titles do not indicate the actual role behavior of a public relations manager. As such, this constitutes a limitation of the study, but was deemed adequate for an exploratory study. The managers interviewed held a variety of titles including Public Relations Manager, Vice President of Public Relations, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Communications, Director of Public Relations, Director of Marketing Communications, Vice President of Public Affairs, and Public Affairs Director. The managers interviewed worked for health care organizations, banks, non-profit organizations, an insurance company, civic organizations, defense contractors, a utility and a newspaper.

The respondents were chosen using an initial purposive sample, supplemented with snowball sampling. Although the interviews were guided by an interview schedule, the researcher deviated from the schedule when exploring potentially fruitful lines of questioning. The interviewer attempted to understand not only the reasons for encroachment, but also why respondents held these views.

Eight of the managers had public relations backgrounds and eight did not. A manager was classified as having a public relations background if she or he belonged to a professional association for public relations practitioners, had a degree in public relations or journalism, and had at least five years of experience in public relations.

A number of reasons for encroachment were explored. Reasons internal to public relations include technician role aspirations and lack of manager

competencies in public relations practitioners. External factors included perceived lack of manager competencies in public relations practitioners, confusion on the part of top management regarding the public relations function, and aggressive expansion on the part of advertising and marketing professionals.

Findings

Internal Factors

When prompted by the interviewer, managers commented on a number of internal reasons for encroachment including technician role aspirations and lack of manager competencies in public relations practitioners.

Technician Role Aspirations. The managers were almost evenly split regarding practitioner role aspirations. Approximately half of the managers think public relations practitioners are content to stay at the technician level. According to one manager,

> Let's face it, it's a lot more fun to try to crank out a feature query or press release or be quoted in the newspaper, than to try to figure out how in the heck to help build and promote a new program against stiff competition and to be accountable for that against some financial measures. That's kind of scary, particularly if you don't have a financial background, and most public relations practitioners do not.

The other half of the managers believe that most public relations technicians aspire to the management role.

> I think that's the big frustration for public relations people today, not being able to have the management role. I was at a conference a couple of weeks ago with my peers and I know that if I had announced I was quitting my job, 6,000 resumes would have been sent here by Monday. They were all green with

> envy over the amount of control I have here. There seems to be a real hunger to have creative control and be able to do the big picture.

Lack of Competencies. Most practitioners cited the narrow focus of public relations practitioners as their downfall.

> I think (encroachment) shows what the deficiencies are in the public relations people who might be (in the company) . . . the public relations person today needs to know more than just media skills and communications skills. They need to really know business. If it is a company that is highly regulated, the public relations people need to also have a background in law, or some knowledge of law, so they can do their job effectively.

Another manager said, "When I got this position, my boss said, 'Now, don't become known as the public relations lady. You can do so much more than that. You're a manager, you understand budgets, you have a technical background. Don't get slotted into a job that's too narrow.'" This practitioner's boss does not consider knowledge of budgets or other managerial skills as part of the public relations management role. One manager sees practitioners as lacking key competencies whereas another's boss sees a practitioner's competencies as greater than the role. In both cases, an unbalanced relationship emerges in which top management expectations are incongruous with practitioner expectations, a situation that may lead to encroachment.

The interviews suggest two internal variables in a model explaining encroachment. They are: 1. the behavioral skills necessary to act effectively in the public relations manager role, or manager competencies; and 2. the psychological predisposition or attraction to manager activities, or manager aspirations.

External Factors

When asked why more public relations management positions are being assumed by non-public relations professionals, managers cited such external factors as perceived lack of manager competencies, confusion on the part of top managers, changing business conditions, and aggressive expansion by marketing professionals.

Perceived Lack of Manager Competencies. With two exceptions, respondents were reluctant to acknowledge that top management perceives public relations practitioners as lacking necessary competencies. However, when prompted, managers stated,

> I don't detect it being incompetence. I detect it as being a lot of fluff without a lot of content -- that the public relations person is always just glad-handing around.

> There's that old public relations flack reputation that a lot of us are still fighting -- the fact that you can be bought and that you'll promote anything.

> I think what has come under fire more is the fact that public relations practitioners have been too isolated from the course of business, too concerned with intangibles.

Two respondents acknowledged that top management perceives public relations practitioners as lacking important management competencies:

> There is a view that the traditional public relations person has much less value . . . than someone who can come in and appreciate the tools of public relations and make those work in a highly visible way to buttress the bottom line and track how they have succeeded. It is that type of manager who is going to

be senior vice president and sit in the cabinet on the executive team.

One of the worst things you can get in the world is an APR. I'm always surprised when I meet someone who has one who knows something about public relations.

An individual is defined as competent if he or she is properly qualified to be effective for a particular purpose (Davies, 1976). Respondent comments suggest that public relations practitioners lack certain essential qualities necessary to be effective. These qualities include broad knowledge and understanding of issues, truthfulness, and integrity.

Confusion. Several managers cited top management confusion as a reason for encroachment. "One thing that is dismaying about the public relations function is that people think this is something anyone can do." When prompted, all respondents agreed that top management often doesn't understand what public relations is and what it can do. Respondents commented:

Every place I've worked (management has been confused). There's the feeling that you can go to a paper and tell them what to run and when, and they'll do it. There are some managers who believe you can go in and stop a negative story. There are some managers who think that public relations and advertising are the same thing. What I found is that you do a lot of education.

A lot of managers still perceive public relations as press agentry -- get us in the paper or keep us out of the paper. I'm not really sure they yet fully embrace the perspective that

public relations people can bring to the table. I don't think we're seen as being able to add to the decision process.

Top management doesn't see a difference between marketing, advertising, and public relations. That may be why they are bringing in people with backgrounds in sales, or marketing, or advertising.

They think lots of the things we do are with bells and whistles, and we think what we do involves lots of hard work and intelligence.

The comments above suggest incongruency between expectations of top management and those of public relations managers. Practitioners interviewed believe top management views public relations as a largely technical, staff function. However, the practitioners interviewed view public relations as a line function complete with decision-making responsibilities.

Finally, one executive cited changing business conditions as a possible reason for encroachment. This manager stated, "There may be a tendency in some companies going through a restructuring or changes due to their own down-sizing or buy-outs to put people in the public relations jobs who have been in something else because suddenly there is no position for them anymore." The same manager also suggested that the public relations manager position may be considered a holding place for excess middle managers until they are ready to retire, or as an exit position.

Marketing Imperialism. The majority of public relations managers believe that public relations suffers as the marketing and advertising functions expand. These managers view this not so much as a territorial

battle as the need for change in public relations itself. Several managers argued that public relations is often taken over by other departments because the public relations department can't prove its contribution to the bottom line. According to one manager,

> It goes back to business wanting public relations to be accountable for some results and marketing has always been in a better position in that regard. It's based on products, research, tracking, and competitive analysis . . . (public relations) needs to be linked to building markets, to contributing to the bottom line, to building good strong positions . . . I don't know if it is a territorial battle as much as it is a reality that traditional public relations needs to change.

The interviews suggest that external variables affecting encroachment include: 1. top managers expectations of public relations practitioners, or the role sent; 2. the rate of change in the organization, or organizational turbulence; and 3. the aggressiveness or imperialism of an organization's marketing staff.

Toward a Theory of Encroachment

From the exploratory interviews, this researcher developed a theoretical model to explain encroachment (see Figure 1). This model specifies factors leading to encroachment and should serve as a guide for future research.

Figure 1 about here

The purpose of this section is to describe the model of encroachment developed from the exploratory interviews, rather than to elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of that model. However, it should be noted that in

order to understand the reasons for encroachment, it is necessary to examine the power relationships within organizations. In other words, it is necessary to determine why some departments in organizations are more powerful than others. The power-control (Robbins, 1987) or power-value (Hage, 1980) perspective examines these relationships. According to this paradigm, members of the dominant coalition mediate the relationship between the organization's environment and the organization's structure and strategy. Burns and Stalker (1961) used this mediating construct to explain observed instances in which rapid changes in the environment produced a more rigidly structured organization, rather than producing a more flexible organizational structure predicted by the environmental imperative. Thus, environmental conditions affect the organization only insofar as they affect and influence the dominant coalition.

Although open systems theory suggests that organizations must develop structures and processes that optimally respond to their environments, the power-control perspective suggests that dominant coalitions -- "the constituencies with the most power both inside and outside the organization" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 119) -- have a range of decisions available to them.

> There is a range of decisions between those that optimize organizational effectiveness and those that cause its collapse. This range is the 'wiggle room' within which the dominant coalition makes decisions (political compromises) that permit divergent self interest of members of the dominant coalition to be accommodated. (Dozier, 1988, p. 10).

Future research should further investigate how the power-control perspective can be used as an explanatory device for encroachment.

As conceptualized in Figure 1, role enacted is the result of three factors: role aspirations, role competencies and role sent.

Role aspirations represent psychological predispositions to engage in certain public relations activities. Practitioners possessing manager aspirations find activities that managers engage in to be attractive and are thus drawn to them. Similarly, practitioners possessing technician aspirations find activities that technicians engage in to be attractive and are thus drawn to those activities.

Role competencies are the behavioral skills necessary to engage in public relations activities. Practitioners possessing manager role competencies have acquired skills through formal education and experience and include broad knowledge of issues, integrity and honesty. Practitioners possessing technician role competencies have acquired skills through informal education and training and include narrow knowledge of techniques.

The role relationship between the most senior public relations practitioner and his/her supervisor also indirectly influences levels of encroachment. In this model, a manager or technician role is sent by top management and a manager or technician role is enacted by public relations practitioners. Although managers may engage is some technical tasks, and technicians may make some managerial decisions, practitioners play one role predominantly. The prodominant role is called the dominant role. This interaction of role expectations and enactments yields four end states, two stable and two unstable.

Status Quo End State. One stable end state occurs when the role sent and the role enacted is the technician role. In this case, the practitioner possesses neither the behavioral skills (competencies) nor the psychological predisposition (aspirations) to enact the manager role.

Although this interaction of roles sent and enacted is stable, this configuration leaves the public relations function without management. In other words, a "managerial vacuum" is created. In such organizations, public relations is viewed as a function of secondary importance. Both top management and the most senior public relations practitioner view public relations as a low-level technical function requiring skills that can be acquired through informal means. Because even the most senior practitioner fails to provide management, individuals from other departments, in this case marketing, are able to take over activities traditionally performed by the less powerful department. Eventually, top management assigns an individual from marketing to manage public relations and encroachment occurs. The presence of organizational turbulence increases the chances that encroachment will occur. Organizational turbulence occurs as the result of mergers, acquisitions and down-sizing. These changing business conditions increase pressures to juggle personnel. As a result, top management is forced to give more responsibilities to fewer individuals, and/or duties inappropriate to a professional's background.

Functionary End State. Bell and Bell (1976) distinguish between functionary and functional modes of public relations. In the functionary mode, public relations does not initiate action. Rather,

> public relations follows the dictates of management and does not aspire to advisory or decision-making roles. The functionary mode is characterized as a collection of common-sense tasks carried out by practitioners technically proficient in journalistic skills (p. 51).

Bell and Bell's notion of functionary public relations describes the second predicted end state. In this case, an unstable end state occurs when

the manager role is sent, but the technician role is enacted. Again, the practitioner possesses neither the skills nor the psychological predisposition necessary to enact the manager role. Top management's expectations exceed those of the public relations practitioner. Two possible outcomes emerge from this instability, both leading to encroachment. Top management may continue to perceive the public relations function as a management function of primary importance to the organization, requiring specialized educational preparation and expertise. In this case, top management recognizes a "managerial vacuum" in the department and replaces the technician with someone with greater managerial competencies. In another scenario, top management retains the technician, but creates a superior position for someone else to manage the function. As a result, encroachment occurs once again. The presence of organizational turbulence and marketing imperialism increases the likelihood of encroachment in this end state.

Aspiring End State. Another unstable role relationship occurs when the public relations practitioner seeks to assume a manager role, but top management expects a technical role. The practitioner in this case possesses both the behavioral skills and psychological predisposition necessary to enact the manager role. From this unstable relationship, two outcomes are possible. In the first outcome, the practitioner "educates" management about an expanded practitioner role. Top management then changes the role sent from technician to manager and comes to regard public relations as a primary function. The role relationship becomes stable and no encroachment occurs. In the second outcome, top management continues to expect the technician role and to consider public relations a secondary function. The dissatisfied practitioner leaves or is fired. An opportunistic marketing department recognizes the "managerial vacuum"

created and expands its activities into public relations. Eventually, top management assigns a marketing professional to manage public relations and encroachment occurs. Organizational turbulence magnifies the problems created by an unstable role relationship, but does not affect a stable role relationship.

Functional End State. According to Bell and Bell (1976), when public relations operates in the functional mode it

> has the potential to act in an advisory capacity and to have impact on decision-making. This potential in turn leads to some control over its own domain in times of crisis and, as a sensing device, public relations can be effective in preventing many potential crisis situations (p. 53).

In this stable end state, the manager role is sent by top management and that is the role enacted by the public relations practitioner. The practitioner possesses the competencies and aspirations necessary to enact the manager role. Viewed as a primary function by both actors in the role relationship, public relations management is expected and provided. As a result, encroachment is less likely to occur. Even in the presence of organizational turbulence, marketing imperialism, or both, the public relations manager role is not threatened because it is considered important and is firmly entrenched.

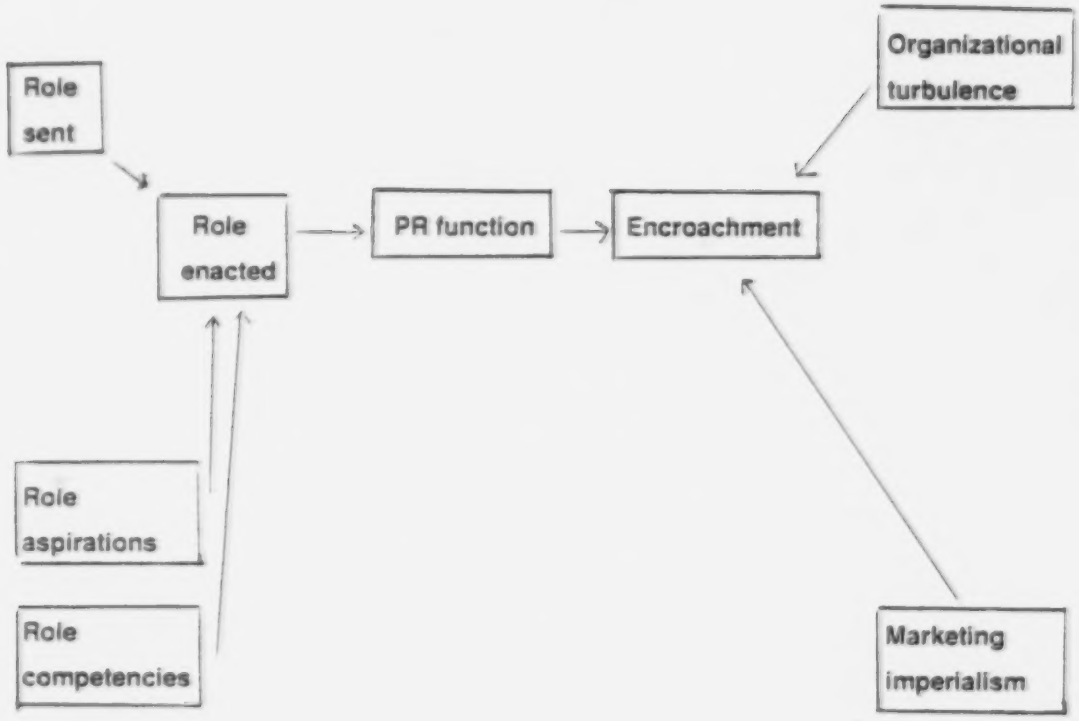
Conclusion

This model has major implications for the power of public relations departments in organizations. It suggests that when practitioners possess the psychological predisposition and skills necessary to enact the manager role, and when practitioners and top management hold a powerful ideology of public relations, public relations becomes more powerful.

Future research should quantitatively test the models described above using a national sample of public relations managers both with and without public relations backgrounds. The supervisors of these managers should also be surveyed to determine the accuracy of public relations practitioner's perceptions. The Broom item set could be used to assess role enacted and modified to measure role sent. Items measuring the scope of a practitioner's focus should also be added to these sets. Measures must also be developed for manager role competencies, role aspirations, marketing imperialism and organizational turbulence.

Figure 1

A Theoretical Model of Encroachment



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SHIFTING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PARADIGM:

A THEORY OF DONOR RELATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

Taking a critical approach to fund raising, this paper rejects generally accepted explanations and employs systems theory and the concept of organizational autonomy to develop a different perspective. Fund raising is reoriented to the body of knowledge of public relations, resulting in a theory that defines it as a specialization of public relations. Current theories are used as analytical tools to provide a new way of explaining the fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations.

Introduction: Unresolved Problems

In 1988, tax-deductible gifts to American charitable organizations exceeded $100 billion for the first time (American Association of Fund-Raising Council [AAFRC] Trust for Philanthropy, 1989). In 1987, these nonprofit organizations received $93.7 billion, which was more than the combined profits of all *Fortune* 500 companies ($91 billion) and if computed as sales, would have placed charitable organizations second on the *Fortune* 500 list, ranked only behind General Motors and more than $17 billion ahead of the Exxon Corporation (AAFRC Trust for Philanthropy, 1988).

Whether viewed as sales or begging for alms, the "getting" of tax-deductible gifts has reached new heights in recent years. To offset reductions in federal funding during the 1980s and to maximize their share of philanthropic giving, the estimated 790,000 organizations that are categorized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as charities are increasingly hiring fund-raising practitioners and charging them to raise increasingly higher totals of gift revenue ("The Reagan Years," 1988). Although no reliable statistics are available, it can be estimated that tens of thousands of men and women today--and perhaps, hundreds of thousands--carry out fund-raising duties as paid employees of charitable organizations. One indicator of this growth is that membership in the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE) has grown from fewer than 2,000 in 1979 to more than 10,000 in 1989 (NSFRE, 1989).

These fund-raising practitioners conduct prospect research to identify potential donors, plan special events to cultivate donors, solicit gifts by direct mail, phonathons, proposals, and face-to-face meetings, and write and edit publications to report fund-raising results and recognize donors. To help them carry out these duties, practitioners rely on fund-raising principles that have evolved through anecdotal material and studies that have primarily been administrative in purpose. Collectively, these principles form a dominant perspective of the fund-raising function that focuses on how to raise more money without questioning the rationale for the function or its

effect on recipient organizations and society. For example, the following four important questions rarely are raised about fund raising:

1. Are the underlying assumptions of current fund-raising principles valid, or are some of the more important ones misconceptions and "myths?"

2. Is the relationship between a charitable organization and its donors one of benevolence, business, or pseudo-relations?

3. How does fund raising contribute to organizational effectiveness?

4. How and why do charitable organizations practice fund raising in different ways?

Although varying opinions may be offered in response, fund-raising research has made little progress in answering these important questions. Without a theoretical base grounded in the literature of academic disciplines, fund raising traditionally has been ignored by educators as a subject worthy of scholarly study (Simon, 1987). Part-time practitioner-scholars generally have produced research on fund raising that "has been sporadic, scatter-gun, and often pedestrian" (Carbone, 1986, pp. 22-23). Although there has been a dramatic increase of scholarly activity in the domain of philanthropy, fund raising as an organizational function has not been identified as one of the agreed upon problems that define that domain of study (e.g., Powell, Ed., 1987). This lack of scholarly interest in fund raising is illustrated by the fact that only 80, or 3 percent, of the 2,717 research projects on philanthropy and nonprofit organizations identified by the Independent Sector over the last five years have focused on the fund-raising function (Independent Sector, 1988). In short, the above questions can be viewed as major problems of fund raising that have remained unresolved by previous research.

These unresolved problems are, or should be, of great concern to practitioners who are charged to raise billions of dollars with little substantive theory to guide them. It is time, therefore, to step back from the current perspective of the practice and study of fund raising to ask a fifth and critical question:

5. How can fund raising be explained in a different way that would help us more fully understand the current fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations?

This paper, which capsulizes the theory of donor relations developed in a recent dissertation directed by James E. Grunig (Kelly, 1989), is designed to answer that critical question, as well as those important questions raised earlier.

Using Critical Methodology to Build Theory

In a departure from previous research, this paper takes a critical approach to fund raising. According to Hall (1980), critical studies are valuable in advancing knowledge because they focus on "significant *breaks*--where old lines of thought are disrupted, older constellations displaced, and elements, old and new, are regrouped around a different set of premises and themes" (p. 57). The use of critical methodology is justified on two bases: 1) the absence of critical studies in fund raising, as well as an under-representation in public relations; and 2) its appropriateness for studying the selected object of analysis.

First, few--if any--scholarly studies have critically examined the fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations. Yet, fund raising is a $100-billion-a-year function that touches approximately 80 percent of the adults in the United States, who make at least one charitable contribution each year (Payton, 1987). This economic factor, alone, raises critical questions about the function of fund raising.

Fund raising is a function of free speech that is protected under the First Amendment, as reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 1988 ("House Panel," 1989). As such, it is deserving of attention by communication scholars, particularly those in the specialty of public relations who deal with the communication of organizations. Yet, as will be documented later, fund raising has basically been a nonsubject of communication study. Through its selected methodology, this paper criticizes the public relations paradigm for its neglect of fund raising and shifts that paradigm to include a theory of donor relations.

Second, it is argued that critical methodology is appropriate for the object of analysis in this paper (i.e., the subject of this paper calls for a methodology that allows for a broader approach than that provided by other methodologies, such as empirical studies). According to

Freire (1970), "The investigation will be most educational when it is most critical, and most critical when it avoids the narrow outlines of partial or 'focalized' views of reality, and sticks to the comprehension of total reality" (p. 99). Critical methodology allows this paper to concentrate on building a cohesive theory of donor relations from the conceptual blocks provided by scholars in other fields (e.g., organizational sociology, higher education, economics, and public relations), rather than presenting a narrower theory, or a "focalized view of reality," and then testing that narrower theory through data collection.

In addition, the purpose of this paper (i.e., shifting the public relations paradigm to encompass fund raising) calls for a critical analysis of *current* fund-raising perspectives in order to justify its placement within a new and different paradigm. Although there has been little effort to critically examine fund-raising principles, there is evidence in the literature that others believe such an approach is justified. As Pray (1981) says, "Perhaps, we may speculate, the need to reappraise certain basic principles has been obscured by the too-ready acceptance of the 'body of knowledge and practice,' which has grown in our field to have almost the acceptance of law when, in fact, some of it may be merely myth" (p. xiv).

Given the above defense for using critical methodology, how does the paper fit within the parameters of what is defined as a critical study? According to the inaugural issue of *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (Speech Communication Association, 1984), critical studies may be based on original research data, on analysis of an existing body of literature, or on new theoretical arguments. Additionally, such studies are expected to make a critical statement. This paper both analyzes an existing body of literature (i.e., fund raising) and advances new theoretical arguments, as well as making critical statements.

Some Preliminary Definitions of Fund Raising and Public Relations

Gurin (1989) defines fund raising as "advising and assisting organizations in seeking and accepting gift support" (Introduction). Although "fund raising" is probably the oldest concept used to describe the fund-raising activities of charities, many organizations now use the term

"development" to describe those activities--in part because of the negative connotations of "fund raising" (Payton, 1987). Development practitioners generally define their role more broadly than fund raising, equating the latter term to just one part of the development, or fund-raising, process--that of solicitation. Through their quest to broaden the fund-raising function beyond solicitation, many practitioners have adopted the term "institutional advancement," which the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) advocates as an umbrella term for the organizational functions of fund raising, public relations, alumni relations, government relations, and publications (Carbone, 1987). In many charitable organizations, this movement has resulted in institutional advancement offices that today are headed by fund raisers (Kelly, 1989, Winter).

This paper uses development and fund raising synonymously to describe the narrower function that manages the purposive process of soliciting and accepting gifts on behalf of a charitable organization. The term, institutional advancement, is not used in this paper.

Following Grunig and Hunt (1984), public relations is defined as the "management of communication between an organization and its publics" (p. 6). As so defined, public relations is broader than communication techniques, such as publications, and broader than specialized public relations programs, such as media relations, employee relations, or donor relations. According to Grunig (in preparation), "Public relations describes the overall planning, execution, and evaluation of an organization's communication with both external and internal publics--groups that affect the ability of an organization to meet its goals."

Building Theory Through Step-by-Step Processes

Using critical methodology, this paper brings to light serious flaws in some of the major assumptions on which current principles of fund raising are based. As a result of these misconceptions and myths, generally accepted explanations of fund raising are rejected as incomplete, misleading, and lacking in explanatory power. Proceeding from that basis, the paper's purpose is to shift the public relations paradigm to encompass fund raising. To justify

such a shift, fund raising is reoriented to the body of knowledge of public relations, which provides a reinterpretation and a fuller understanding of the function. To support this reorientation, systems theory and the concept of organizational autonomy are employed, and a case is made by systematic, step-by-step processes that lead to a new and different perspective of fund raising. The result is a theory that defines fund raising as a specialization of public relations (i.e., donor relations).

The organizational behavior that is the object of analysis and discussion in this paper is fund raising by charitable organizations. Although the analysis and its findings are intended to apply to organizations in all six categories of charities as defined by the AAFRC Trust (1989) (i.e., education, religion, health, human service, arts, culture & humanities, and public/society benefit), one subcategory, higher education, is used throughout as a focus for in-depth analysis. Thus, an assumption is made that there are enough cross-category similarities in the fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations to support such generalizations.

The Fund-Raising Function in Higher Education

Fund raising--as an ongoing set of activities managed by internal specialists--is a relatively new organizational function for public *and* private colleges and universities (Pray, 1981). Before World War I, fund raising was primarily the responsibility of boards of trustees and, before that, of presidents (Rudolph, 1962). Between World War I and II, fund-raising needs of educational institutions were met by periodic campaigns managed by commercial fund-raising firms working with trustees and presidents (Cutlip, 1965). It wasn't until after World War II that fund raising was institutionalized when colleges and universities hired their first internal fund raisers and these new practitioners joined the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA) and the American Alumni Council (AAC) in the early 1950s (Pray, 1981). A serious implication of this evolution is that fund raising moved out of the hands of senior policy makers and managers of overall finances into the hands of practitioners who frequently research, plan, execute, and evaluate their function outside the academic mainstream.

In addition, the beginning of this new organizational function occurred during a time that is now referred to as the golden age of higher education--an era of growth, expansion, and unprecedented governmental support (Nielsen, 1984). Through increasing student tuitions, state appropriations and federal grants, resources were plentiful so colleges and universities could continually add new programs in accordance with ideas and innovations prompted by private gifts restricted in purpose (Nielsen). Because an educational institution's mission could be broadly defined, most gift purposes, or gift conditions, could fit comfortably within a college's mission. Reflecting on that period, Pray (1981) says, "The practice at most institutions was to add programs without much reexamination of existing programs" (p. 3). Today, colleges and universities increasingly are turning to fund raising to generate revenue needed to support core programs; yet fund raising--as discussed in more detail later--is evaluated solely on the basis of dollars raised, with little concern being given to the purposes of the gifts. Most fund raisers are evaluated by the number of dollars they generate, not by the "utility" of the gifts they raise.

A commonly accepted definition of philanthropic giving is the one provided by Boulding (1973), who says that gifts are the "voluntary, one-way transfer of exchangeables" (p. 1). This definition, and others like it, have disguised the fact that the giver expects consideration in return for the gift, and sometimes, this two-way transfer has serious implications for an organization's autonomy. Recent news items on higher education document the potential of private gifts to negatively affect the autonomy of charitable organizations. For example, a recent article ("B-Schools," 1989) reports that Bill Daniels, a businessman and college dropout, has pledged $10 million to the business school at the University of Denver to teach business students "kindness, courtesy, punctuality, cleanliness, proper dress, as well as academic subjects such as ethics and communications" (p. 85). Daniels is quoted as saying: "I guess I'm telling them what to teach. But goddamn it, it's time someone did" (p. 85).

Although faculty members and administrators at Denver would rather see Daniels' gift used to integrate these skills and topics as part of the overall curriculum, Daniels has insisted

that his money be used to establish a separate entity that will probably be called the Bill Daniels Institute for the Enhancement of Graduate Business Studies ("B-Schools," 1989). Describing the gift's purpose as a finishing school or boot camp, Daniels has made his gift contingent on the college raising another $10 million in matching funds, which will more than likely divert fund-raising efforts from other projects and purposes for quite some time.

In his 1982 book, Harvard University President Derek Bok states that many areas in the fund-raising process are fuzzy, but that the lines are reasonably clear for gifts that endanger "Justice Frankfurter's four essential freedoms of the university--to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study" (p. 266). Yet, in September 1987, headlines demonstrated that the four academic freedoms, which are closely related to institutional autonomy, are not immune to the influence of donor relationships. The University of Rochester arranged for a business student to change universities after one of its largest corporate donors and supplier of students complained that since the student worked for a competitor, proprietary information would be at risk in the classroom ("U. of Rochester Cancels," 1987). The student was readmitted after faculty members condemned the action, and Former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, for whom the business school is named, called the incident "blackmail" and said that the university should have told Kodak to "take a walk" ("U. of Rochester Readmits," 1987, p. A34).

Summarizing this stage-setting discussion, the solicitation and acceptance of a gift clearly involves two-way considerations with strong potential for infringement on a charitable organization's power to control its own goals and operations. In addition, today is an era of limited growth for American colleges and universities--an era in which funding choices must be made. Perhaps for the first time the management of relationships with donors must be examined as a negotiating role for acquiring those resources that have utility for the institution. Finally, the evolution of fund raising to a full-time specialization of lay administrators has led to increased levels of fund-raising activity that, at times, appears unrelated to institutional mission.

Current Perspectives of Fund Raising:
Confusing Definitions, Sporadic Research, and Myths

Given the above background, the paper moves to a critical analysis of current perspectives of fund raising and rejects them as being inadequate. The absence of precise definitions, specifically ones that account for differences in types of recipient organizations and types of gifts, have contributed to inappropriate generalizations about philanthropy and confusion about the fund-raising function. According to Payton (1987), there are two historical dimensions to the third sector: philanthropy, which comes from classical Greece; and charity, which can be traced back to its Judeo-Christian origins in the Old Testament. As Payton describes the differences, "On the one hand, then, the charitable-religious, and on the other, the philanthropic-secular; the impulsive and personal and direct act of mercy contrasted with the reflective, prudent, planned determination to build a better community" (p. 8). In other words, philanthropic acts of giving are not synonymous with charitable acts of giving.

A typology of nonprofit organizations utilizing legal definitions and political concepts developed by Douglas (1983) is helpful in clarifying misconceptions about fund raising. This typology categorizes charitable organizations as: 1) those dealing with public goods (i.e., those organizations, such as public television, whose benefits are shared by all regardless of support); 2) those with positive externalities (i.e., those organizations, such as colleges, whose benefits "spill over" into society regardless of support); and 3) those defined as eleemosynary (i.e., those organizations, such as CARE, whose benefits only affect the object of the private support). The failure to differentiate charitable organizations by these legal and political concepts in much of the fund-raising literature has contributed to confusion about the fund-raising function and misconceptions about donor motivation. For example, the altruistic behavior of donors referred to in much of the literature is related to only one of two subcategories of eleemosynary organizations, a small proportion of charitable organizations to which gifts may be altruistic if the beneficiary is unknown.

Research on fund raising is sparse and generally of poor quality; it receives little scholarly attention as a serious subject. As evidence of the critical need for research on fund raising, for example, the first comprehensive bibliography on philanthropy (Layton, 1987) references 1,614 publications, of which only 9 books and 11 articles--or slightly more than 1 percent--deal with fund raising. In comparison, the bibliography contains 267 articles and books on foundations. In pointing out that fund raising is one of the three primary areas in which far more scholarship is needed, Layton says, "While there is an enormous practical literature on fund-raising, there is almost nothing which examines the phenomenon of 'getting' with the same depth and comprehension that the phenomenon of giving has received" (p. xv).

The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook (1987) is described in its cover testimonial by Katz, president of the American Council of Learned Societies, as "the bible of researchers on the non-profit sector for the next decade." Yet, in the entire 24 chapters, covering 463 pages, there are no studies dealing specifically with the function of fund raising, and, in fact, the term, "fund raiser," does not appear in the book's index.

Turning to the literature on communication and public relations, a title search of the leading communication research journals finds few studies on fund raising (e.g., Ferguson, Doner & Carson, 1986). In addition, a review of *Journalism Abstracts* up to 1989 indicates that little graduate work is being done on fund raising in the communication field. For example, the most recent edition of *Journalism Abstracts* (Fowler, 1989) includes 374 abstracts of dissertations and theses, of which only a study of volunteer blood donors is indexed under the term, "fundraising." In his review of public relations research from 1975 to 1985, Pavlik (1987) makes no mention of studies dealing with fund raising, nor do Grunig and Hickson (1976) in an earlier survey.

The Body of Knowledge Task Force of the PRSA Research Committee (1988) confirms the absence of fund raising as a viable subject of study in public relations and communication, but also provides an important theoretical link for shifting the public relations paradigm to include a theory of donor relations. The task force's report consists of more than 750 citations,

of which only 9 can be identified as publications about fund raising; however, the Task Force clearly intends that fund raising should be defined as a component of public relations when it incorporates the subheading, "Fund-Raising," as the seventh element and function of the professional practice of public relations, along with media relations, community relations, financial and investor relations, internal relations, public affairs, and marketing, marketing support and consumer relations.

In addition to confusing definitions and an absence of research, there are serious flaws in some of the major assumptions on which current principles of fund raising are based. A critical analysis of underlying assumptions identifies several "myths" of fund raising, including the myth of unrestricted gifts and the myth of a broad base of donors.

A generally accepted principle of fund raising is that private support provides the means to independence for charitable organizations, providing "venture capital" for higher education (Kramer, 1980). An underlying assumption of this principle is that the majority of gifts are primarily unrestricted in purpose (i.e., gifts may be used to pursue self-determined goals). As evidence of this myth, the winning study of the 1989 John Grenzebnach Outstanding Published Scholarship Award for research on philanthropy for education is based on the underlying assumption that private support is primarily unrestricted in nature. According to the winning authors, "Unlike appropriations and allocations from government and income from many other sources, voluntary support for colleges and universities takes on relatively unrestricted spending forms" (Leslie and Ramey, 1988, p. 115). The authors say that while the spending of other resources, particularly government funding, is prescribed or at least closely regulated, "much voluntary support may be expended almost without constraint" (p. 115).

Yet, widely available statistics on private giving to colleges and universities prove otherwise. The Council for Aid to Education (CFAE) conducts an annual survey on gifts to colleges and universities that traditionally accounts for approximately 85 percent of the total given to higher education each year. In 1987-1988, 420 public institutions and 722 private

institutions reported total gifts of approximately $7 billion, of which $1.1 billion was given for unrestricted use for current operations and $0.4 billion was given for unrestricted endowment ("Gifts to Colleges Off," 1989). Unrestricted giving, therefore, totalled $1.5 billion of the total $7 billion raised by these institutions, or only 21 percent of all gifts. In other words, *79 percent of gift dollars to colleges and universities in 1987-1988 were restricted in their use.*

The myth of a broad base of donors has hidden the fact that practitioners are increasingly focusing their fund-raising efforts on donors of major gifts, who, individually, can infringe on organizational autonomy. This last myth is analyzed in the context of the current flood of capital campaigns for colleges and universities, which are dependent for success on a small percentage of donors who make multi-million-dollar gifts.

Capital campaigns have evolved from periodic, intensive, short "drives" for funds needed for capital projects, such as new buildings, into today's intensive, highly structured, multi-year efforts to raise private money for operations, endowment, and capital projects. As Pray (1981) says, "Today, colleges are engaging in a continuous search for major gifts, usually in what we might call a rolling campaign strategy" (pp. 57-58). Stanford University "redefined the outer limits of fund raising" when it announced a $1.1-billion capital campaign in 1986 ("The Reagan Years," 1988, p. 22). Currently at least 145 institutions of higher education are conducting capital campaigns with totals of $15 million or more ("UM Enters," 1988). Taken together, these 145 institutions, of which about one-third are public, are trying to raise $18 billion, or twice the amount given to *all* colleges and universities in 1986-87.

The increases in capital campaigns correlate with the rise in "mega gifts" (multi-million-dollar gifts) and "ultimate gifts" (those major gifts that donors can probably give only once because of the substantial portion of resources they represent) that are needed for "lead gifts" (those large, pre-campaign gifts, predominantly from individuals, that set the level for successive gifts). A formal principle of fund-raising campaigns is the "Rule of Thirds," which traditionally has meant that approximately one-third of the campaign goal would be raised from 10 percent or

less of the donors (Seymour, 1966). That rule has changed in recent years so that fund-raising experts now predict that less than 1 percent of the gifts to a campaign will account for one-third of the total (e.g., Campbell, 1989). As a result, colleges and universities entering capital campaigns have become increasingly dependent upon the super rich who can provide the lead gifts necessary to attract other mega gifts and to ensure the success of a campaign, regardless of the actions of thousands of lower-level donors who provide the bulk of the number of gifts.

Systems Theory and Autonomy: Approaching Fund Raising From a Macro Perspective

Rejecting current perspectives of fund raising, the paper turns to systems theory for a theoretical foundation on which to build a new theory of donor relations. Specifically, the resource dependence perspective of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity, Blau's (1986) theory of social and power exchange, and Mintzberg's (1983) power theory are applied to fund raising to provide a theoretical explanation of the relationships between charitable organizations and the donors in their environment. In our complex and specialized society, interdependencies between organizations and groups in an environment are managed through an exchange process that involves economic, political, and social resources. In response to the second question raised at the beginning of this paper on the relationship between donors and recipient organizations, it is argued here that--contrary to conventional wisdom--such relationships are best understood not as benevolent, business, or pseudo relations, but as an interdependency of groups and organizations within an environment.

The resource dependence theory of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) advances the perspective that organizations are controlled by their relationships to external sources of necessary resources. The amount of control (i.e., the degree of autonomy that is given up by the recipient organization in order to obtain the resource) is negotiable. According to Pfeffer and Salancik, "Organizations are other-directed, involved in a constant struggle for autonomy and discretion, confronted with constraint and external control" (p. 257).

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) describe four strategies for organizations to use to avoid external control, which can be related to charitable organizations involved in fund raising: 1) building an inventory (e.g., building endowments to avoid dependence on lower-level donors of unrestricted gifts or on major donors of restricted gifts); 2) defining terms of the exchange relationship (e.g., establishing fund-raising policies that standardize procedures and the dollar amounts of named gift opportunities); 3) developing substitutable exchanges (e.g., developing a broad base of lower-level and major donors); and 4) diversifying and building alternative financial sources (e.g., seeking a balance between user fees, public funding, and gifts).

Powell and Friedkin (1987) used the resource-dependence perspective to analyze the relationship between donors and the programming staff who were involved in producing the public television series, "Dance in America." This analysis of a public goods charity, as defined by the typology of nonprofit organizations presented earlier, illustrates how dependency on fewer donors facilitates external control of a charitable organization. According to the scholars, "As long as resources were abundant, the staff was able to manage the divergent demands of the different funders either by playing them off against one another or by attending to them sequentially" (p. 182). However, the scholars say that "when resources shrunk and only a few funding sources provided the bulk of the money, the staff lost its room to maneuver and the funders gained much greater say in program content" (p. 182).

Saying that the norm of reciprocity holds that "those whom you have helped have an obligation to help you," Gouldner (1960) explains, "The conclusion is clear: if you want to be helped by others you must help them; hence it is not only proper but also expedient to conform with the specific status rights of others and with the general norm" (p. 173).

At one extreme of the norm of reciprocity, the benefits exchanged are equal; at the other extreme, one party may give nothing in return for the benefits it has received. Much more common, however, is the intermediary case in which one party gives something more or less than that received. It is important to emphasize that the value of the benefits involved in a

reciprocal relationship can only be assigned by the perception of the receiver (i.e., a benefit, such as a recognition dinner, might be viewed by some donors as too much of a reward and by others as too little). Gouldner (1960) describes the benefit value of being too much or too little as a continuum bounded on both ends by exploitation.

According to Blau (1968), the concept of social exchange is not derived from psychological principles that govern the motives of individuals, but is purely social in nature. "The objective of exchange theory," he says, "is to explain social life in terms of exchange principles by analyzing the reciprocal processes composing exchange, not to explain why individuals participate in certain exchange relations in terms of the motives and the underlying psychological principles" (p. ix). In order to specify the conditions that produce an imbalance of power in exchange transactions, Blau (pp. 118-119) reformulates a schema developed by Emerson (1962) for examining power-dependence relations and their consequences. The following is another version of the reformulated schema that has been simplified and adapted to specify the conditions that produce an imbalance of power in exchange transactions between a charitable organization and donors:

> A charitable organization that needs private gifts can:
>
> 1) supply a donor with a service that he wants badly to induce him to offer his gift in return;
>
> 2) obtain the needed gift elsewhere;
>
> 3) can coerce the donor to furnish the gift;
>
> 4) learn to resign itself to do without gifts; or
>
> 5) comply with the donor's wishes. (Assumes the organization is not willing or able to choose alternatives 1-4; leads to domination over it.)

In addition to specifying the conditions that produce an imbalance of power, Blau (1987) says the schema "can be employed to indicate the conditions of social independence" (p. 119). In other words, the first four alternatives enable charitable organizations to maintain social independence and to avoid the fifth alternative of compliance or loss of autonomy.

Building on Blau's (1986) discussion of power in social exchanges, Mintzberg (1983) raises the question, "For whom does the organization exist?" and answers it by saying, "For anyone who can gain the power to determine its actions" (p. 243). Underlying Mintzberg's power theory is the premise that organizational behavior is a power game in which various players (influencers) seek to control the organization's decisions and actions. Mintzberg says, "Organizations seek to avoid being controlled [but] ironically, to gain some control over activities of another organization, the focal organization must surrender some of its own autonomy" (p. 261). In other words, although an organization strives to preserve its autonomy, interdependencies with groups and organizations in its environment will necessitate some loss of autonomy (i.e., in order to raise gifts from external donors, charitable organizations will abdicate some degree of their independence). The degree of autonomy lost or gained through fund raising will be determined through the process of negotiations with donors. As Mintzberg says, "When an organization doesn't or can't control, its second choice is to negotiate" (p. 183).

Summarizing the theoretical foundation drawn from systems theory, charitable organizations are dependent on external sources for private funding, and these sources are dependent on the recipient organizations for some form of reciprocity. The process is an ongoing one that requires management and negotiation in order to achieve some degree of equilibrium between what is gained for the organization and what is lost in the exchange. Charitable organizations face a double-edged sword: In order to enhance their autonomy, they must seek external funding to support their institutional goals, but in so doing, they risk losing autonomy by accepting gifts that limit their power to determine goals and the means of pursuing those goals.

As emphasized in the above discussion, a major concept of systems theory is that organizations strive to maintain a high degree of autonomy through the effective management of interdependencies. Grunig's (e.g., 1976, in preparation) theory of public relations, which is grounded in systems theory, is introduced here because of its value in explaining the relationship

between managing external relations and organizational autonomy. A central premise of Grunig's theory is that autonomy is a primary organizational goal and that the purpose of public relations is to enhance and protect organizational autonomy by effectively managing communications between an organization and the various publics in its environment.

Grunig (in preparation), therefore, has defined the contribution of public relations as what it *saves* an organization by helping to maintain autonomy from external forces such as government regulation or activist pressures. In addition to tying public relations to the concept of organizational autonomy, Grunig provides a segmentation of an organization's publics that relates fund raising to environmental interdependencies. Grunig and Hunt (1984) use Esman's four types of linkages that are critical to the survival of an organization (i.e., enabling, functional, normative, and diffused) to explain why organizations have public relations programs, or specializations. These programs are targeted for specific groups or publics, such as government, employees, and consumers, and are referred to as government relations, employee, or internal, relations, and consumer relations. Charitable organizations, according to Grunig and Hunt, have a particularly important linkage to donors:

> Nonprofit organizations maintain their functional linkages with the users of their services. . . . But many must also maintain a critical enabling linkage with sources of funds if they are to survive. Among the organizations that must raise funds are colleges and universities. (p. 361)

In other words, donors are important groups and organizations in the specific environment of those nonprofit organizations classified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as charities. Donors are "enabling" publics in that they are a public that controls the resources that *enable* charitable organizations to exist. A public relations program, or specialization, targeted at this enabling public would be referred to as donor relations.

The issue of autonomy within the context of environmental interdependencies is expanded and enhanced by analyzing the relationship between the educational concept of "institutional autonomy" and private support. Altbach and Berdahl (1981) divide the concept of institutional

autonomy into two parts: College autonomy of a *substantive* nature is defined as the power of a college or university to determine its own goals and programs, and college autonomy of a *procedural* nature is the power of an institution to determine the means by which its goals and programs will be pursued. This distinction is critical in light of the earlier discussion on the utility of gifts in higher education's current era of limited resources. As Lee (1968) states, "The common goals of higher education may be almost infinite, but the local *means to pursue them are always finite*, and the nation may be better served if each institution pursues only those goals which are suitable to its requirements, needs, and abilities" (emphasis added) (p. 15).

Dressel (1980) defines autonomy in higher education as "the ability of a university or college . . . to govern itself without outside controls" (p. 1). Dressel says, "Brief reflection upon this definition leads immediately to the conclusion that autonomy in the sense of complete independence would be possible only if an institution were financially independent. . . .It is evident that no institution can receive support from public or private sources and maintain complete autonomy" (p. 1). Dressel describes the dilemma of the double-edged sword faced by colleges and universities in their fund raising behavior when he says, "Without adequate funding, there is no autonomy, because there is no freedom to consider alternatives, to experiment and innovate, or to improve existing programs and develop new ones" (p. 18).

Drawing from the literature of higher education and philanthropy, this paper provides evidence that resource dependency relationships with all three types of donors (i.e., foundations, corporations, and individuals) can and do infringe upon institutional autonomy. As Salamon (1987) states:

> The notion that the nonprofit sector is independent, after all, can be misleading. Financially, the sector is almost inevitably dependent--on private sources of funds if not public ones. And historically, private funds have often come with strings every bit as onerous and threatening to agency independence as any government has devised. (p. 114)

As one of the three sources of private funds, foundations historically have received the greatest attention from scholars in the fields of philanthropy and higher education and the

greatest amount of criticism for their infringement on institutional autonomy (e.g., Curti & Nash, 1965). Harcleroad (1981) says that the approximately 5,000 foundations with assets of $1 million or more "provide significant help to higher education institutions, and by their choice of the areas they will finance they entice supposedly autonomous colleges to do things they might not do otherwise" (p. 202). "Institutional change," he points out, "continues to be a prime goal of foundations as it has been for most of the past century" (p. 202).

Ylvisaker (1987) says, "Foundations are still generally credited with--and often resented for--playing a disproportionate influential role in the private and public sectors of American society" (p. 360). The influence of foundations, according to Ylvisaker, derives primarily from their vast sums of money, their selectivity, their ability to change the behavior of recipient organizations, and from the leverage they can apply. "These reasons," he says, "go directly to the generic role and art of philanthropy; its ability to choose, concentrate, and leverage" (p. 372).

According to Curti and Nash (1965), the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching used pension funds in the early 1900s to standardize admissions, to define essential elements of a "true" college, and to greatly reduce the number of denominational colleges. Established with a gift of $10 million from Andrew Carnegie to support pensions for college professors, the foundation used membership in the pension fund as a reward for those institutions that conformed to certain standards. Curti and Nash report, "In an effort to eliminate church control of colleges the foundation had been chartered with the stipulation that no pensions would be given to the faculties of institutions under sectarian control" (p. 220). Hundreds of colleges dropped their religious affiliation in order to qualify.

Whitaker (1974) voices a frequent complaint about foundations when he says:

> In response to an application, foundations have been known to impose conditions which a university only accepts reluctantly in order to obtain the grant, or so as not to alienate future potential support from the donor. Whole new departments have been created as "foundation bait." The entire pattern of what some universities are doing is being determined by the appeal a particular field, or even an academic individual, has for foundations or corporate patrons. (p. 216)

The Carnegie Committee (1982) reports that the greatest threat to autonomy in the future will come from the corporate sector as educational institutions continue to take on corporate priorities and leave themselves vulnerable to outside influences. It claims that businessmen long have had influence in the educational world by serving on governing boards and by exerting their influence as wealthy benefactors. "Increasingly," the authors of the Carnegie report say, "academic decisions are being shaped by decisions in the [corporate] board room" (p. 23).

Strikingly different from foundation and individual donors, corporate donors have *proclaimed* philanthropic motivations of "enlightened self-interest." Basically, corporations seek to enhance their position in the marketplace through their philanthropic actions. In other words, corporations--to a greater degree than the other two sources of private support--frequently seek a "quid pro quo" that correlates as close to 1.0 as possible. Calling corporate philanthropy "an oxymoron," Smith (1988) states, "Corporate giving is not altruistic" (p. 7).

Useem (1987) cites DiMaggio's 1983 study that showed how corporate art sponsors, interested in improving their image, have influenced resource-starved museums to focus on blockbuster exhibitions that draw mass publics and publicity, regardless of the preference of the museum. He points to subtle, but noticeable changes in the programs of universities caused by self-swayed administrators who "entice business interest" and seek corporate gifts by focusing attention on applied science, rather than on humanities programs and basic research (p. 355).

Horton (1981), the former director of university relations for IBM, states:

> In recent years some educational institutions, in their eagerness to be seen as deserving of corporate support, have created programs to fit the mold of what they think the companies would most like to support--chairs of free enterprise, for example. . . . They represent something not likely to be at the very top of a college's funding needs. . . . (p. 149)

Living individuals are the primary donors to higher education, as they are to all U.S. charities ("Gifts to Colleges Off," 1989). In 1987-88, individuals gave $3.9 billion, or 48.8 percent, of the $8.1 billion in private funds to all colleges and universities. Unlike foundations and corporations, individuals have rarely been criticized for influencing the recipients of their

gifts; rather, they are commonly viewed as benevolent, disinterested sources of financial support. For example, Leslie and Ramey (1988) say, "Support by individuals thus entails the independent decisions of large numbers of donors, and the links between an institution and any individual are in general of limited importance" (p. 122).

Yet, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* periodically prints a listing of those gifts of $20 million or more that have been made to higher education since 1967. A recent issue lists 35 such gifts that range from $20 million to $105 million, and all but three of the 35 gifts were made by individuals, and the remaining three were from "family foundations" (i.e., foundations controlled by the founders or their families) (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1989, May 10). No major foundations or corporations have made gifts big enough to qualify for the ranking. According to Nielsen (1985), "The industrialization and immense development of the American economy in the 120 years since the Civil War have produced a few million millionaires [as of 1980 it is estimated that some 700,000 were alive and prospering], several hundred centimillionaires, and a dozen or two billionaires" (p. 3). Ylvisaker (1988) says that the assets of the 400 wealthiest Americans is greater than those of all 23,000 U.S. foundations.

Therefore, like foundations and corporations, individuals capable of providing major funding have the potential to seriously infringe on the institutional autonomy of colleges and universities. An example of infringement on institutional autonomy by an individual donor is the situation described earlier in this paper of the businessman who donated $10 million to establish the Daniels Institute at the University of Denver ("B-Schools," 1989).

To generalize beyond colleges and universities, three classic studies--drawn from Powell and Friedkin (1987)--document cases of charitable organizations that have changed their mission and goals primarily because of their dependency on external, philanthropic funding sources. In his 1976 analysis of social service organizations for the blind, Scott found that factors other than client need strongly influenced the agencies' service delivery. Powell and Friedkin (1987) say that organizational persistence and the *perceived* interests of individual donors "were the major

forces that Scott identified as responsible for goal displacement" (p. 183). At their beginning approximately 100 years ago, social service organizations developed programs and services targeted for children and healthy adults--the needy population at the time. Today, most blind people are female, elderly, and only partially blind, yet most services still are directed at children and employable adults. Powell and Friedkin (1987) state:

> Blind children evoke more sympathy from funders than do the elderly blind, and programs to employ blind adults appeal to widely shared values of personal independence. Whether accurate or not, agency administrators perceive that programs for the young, educable, and employable will enjoy better funding than those for the elderly. (p. 183)

Helfgot (1974, 1981) analyzed the history of Mobilization for Youth (MFY), a social welfare agency concerned with juvenile delinquency in New York City. According to Powell and Friedkin (1987), "MFY's history is a story of organizational change generated by a dependency on external sources for resources" (p. 183). Although the Ford Foundation, was first interested in the project because of its attraction to new theories on how delinquency was a product of community factors--not individual inadequacies--MFY's operating programs soon emphasized cultural inferiority. Helfgot argues that this emphasis, though inconsistent with MFY's initial rationale, was consistent with the objectives of the elite funding organizations.

Adler's (1979) study of the California Institute of the Arts, founded by Walt Disney, demonstrates how one major individual donor (including his family) can externally control an institution. After setting aside millions of dollars for establishing the Institute, Disney died, and well before construction was completed lavish plans and cost overruns had used up all of his gift. According to Powell and Friedkin (1987), "This increased the school's already strong dependence on the Disney family and created a perpetual atmosphere of insecurity and crisis" (p. 190). Founded as a utopian community for artists to experiment, Cal Arts was largely transformed into a conventional private art school within two years of its establishment. According to Powell and Friedkin, "As financial pressures increased, the utopian character of the institute dissipated and values originally scorned became the keys to survival" (p. 190).

At this point, three major conclusions of the paper can be stated:

1) *All* sources of donors--foundations, corporations, and individuals--have potential for infringing on the autonomy of charitable organizations;

2) *All* types of charitable organizations--even those eleemosynary charities most closely related to altruistic gifts, as demonstrated by the case study of social service organizations--are vulnerable to losing autonomy during the process of raising private gifts;

3) *All* gifts (i.e., major gifts, individually and collectively, and lower-level gifts, collectively, as demonstrated by the discussion on gift sources and by the case study of social service organizations) have potential to affect organizational autonomy negatively.

These conclusions, based on systems theory and the concept of organizational autonomy, provide a new way of approaching fund raising (i.e., fund raising is the management of environmental funding relationships that contributes to organizational effectiveness by enhancing and protecting autonomy). This approach, in turn, provides a strong argument for shifting the public relations paradigm and reorienting fund raising to that scholarly field.

Shifting the Public Relations Paradigm: Approaching Fund Raising From a Different Perspective

Approaching fund raising from a public relations perspective, this paper specifically uses the public relations theory developed by Grunig (e.g., 1976; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig & Grunig, 1989). First, the fund-raising function is examined as a boundary role of a charitable organization in response to the research question: Within the context of systems theory and autonomy, how can fund raising be reinterpreted on a macro level as a public relations function (i.e., as a negotiator of organizational autonomy with strategic donor publics)?

One of the strategies an organization uses to reduce its dependence on its environment, according to Robbins (1988), is to create boundary roles, which he describes as those roles, like public relations, at the nexus of interaction between an organization and its environment. Adams (cited in Robbins, 1988) says, "Boundary roles are the linkage or mechanisms that organizations create to relieve the threats of uncertainty posed by dependence" (p. 158). As charitable

organizations are dependent on external sources of private support, fund raisers act as a link to donors in order to relieve threats of uncertainty about the ongoing flow of gifts.

Boundary roles also can be viewed as functions that buffer an organization from its environmental dependencies. According to Payton (1987), "To practice philanthropy is to engage in a constant struggle with the claims of self-interest" (p. 277). Thus, the practitioners who manage fund-raising programs on behalf of charitable organizations can be properly described as serving in a boundary role through which they reduce environmental uncertainty of donor dependencies and buffer the organization against claims of self interest. This boundary role is critical to understanding the fund-raising practitioner's key position in affecting organizational autonomy negatively or positively.

Continuing the examination of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, the paper answers two research questions: How can fund raising be reinterpreted on a meso, or departmental level, and on a micro level as a public relations function? Grunig's (in preparation) normative theory of how a public relations department *should* manage communication specifies that in order to practice public relations strategically, an organization "develops programs to communicate with the publics, both external and internal, that provide the greatest threats to and opportunities for the organization." Yet, communication with donor publics is frequently *not* the responsibility of public relations departments in charitable organizations. For example, the consulting firm of Gonser Gerber Tinker Stuhr (1986) advises, "Public relations should be a functional part of the development department," and recommends that public relations "report to the chief development officer" (p. 2).

Such advice on organizational structure, which is inverse to Grunig's (in preparation) theory, has been followed at many charitable organizations (i.e, in many charitable organizations, public relations is a subfunction of fund raising [Kelly, 1989, Winter]). Yet, Grunig recommends an "integrated" public relations department that is responsible for communicating with all strategic publics that may limit or enhance organizational autonomy, saying that such an

operational system is characteristic of effective organizations. Grunig says, "Only in an integrated department is it possible for public relations to be managed strategically." Saying that public relations functions should not be subordinated under other departments, Grunig advises, "Develop dynamic horizontal structures within the department, to make it possible to reassign people and resources to new programs as new strategic publics are identified and other publics cease to be strategic."

This paper contends that theoretical links between the functions of public relations and fund raising have been ignored in previous research because public relations scholars have not understood the fund-raising function and those studying fund raising have limited the definition of public relations to techniques and publicity. In his history of fund raising in the United States, Cutlip (1965) identifies organization and communication as the two separate elements important to fund raising, but says that public relations' role is traditionally one of communication, whereas fund raising is concerned primarily with organizing or managing programs. Yet Pearson (1989) argues that virtually all current definitions of public relations, including Grunig and Hunt's (1984), which was given earlier, have two elements in common: management and communication.

Approaching fund raising from a micro level, the processes, programs, and techniques of public relations are shared by fund raising. For example, while annual giving is primarily built on mass communication techniques, such as direct mail, major gift solicitation requires the same interpersonal communications that the public relations manager generally uses in legislative relations and in dealing with activist publics. This paper contends that fund raising is essentially a communication function and provides evidence by comparing the fund-raising process (i.e., research, cultivation, solicitation, and recognition) with the five communication objectives of public relations: awareness, understanding, belief, favorable attitude, and desired behavior (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Fund raisers generally claim that solicitation, in particular, is unique to their function; yet, a solicitation activity designed to affect behavior (e.g., solicit a gift through

interpersonal communications or through media, such as telephones) is a communication activity with a communication objective. Nor are fund-raising programs primarily concerned with behavior objectives. Wood (1989), for example, describes major gift solicitation as 25 percent research, 60 percent cultivation, 5 percent solicitation, and 10 percent recognition. In other words, only 5 percent of the major-gift process is designed to affect donor behavior, while the remaining 95 percent can be related to the other four communication objectives and to the public relations activity of researching relevant, or strategic, publics.

Given the above arguments, the question arises: If fund raising is placed within the public relations paradigm, how do the theories of that paradigm help explain the fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations? For answers to this question, the paper turns to current theories of public relations to complete the building of a theory of donor relations.

Using Public Relations Theories as Analytical Tools for Explaining Fund Raising

First, Grunig's (1976, 1984; Grunig & Hunt, 1984) theory of public relations models is used to identify four historical models of fund raising, answering the earlier question: *How* do charitable organizations practice fund raising in different ways? Although researchers have attempted to define "ideal" models of fund raising (e.g., Gabrielsen, Webb, cited in Rowland, 1983) and characteristics of "effective" models (e.g., Pickett, 1977; Loessin & Duronio, 1989), the dissertation on which this paper is based represents the first time that theoretical models have been developed to explain how fund raising is practiced differently in different charitable organizations. A table summarizing the characteristics of the four models of fund raising is presented in Table 1.

Using the concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication in 1976, Grunig introduced four models in 1984 that result from the combinations of direction (one-way vs. two-way) and balance of intended effect (asymmetrical vs. symmetrical). In their textbook, *Managing Public Relations*, Grunig and Hunt (1984) discuss the four models of public relations:

Table 4

Characteristics of Four Models of Fund Raising*

	Models			
Characteristics	Press Agentry/ Publicity	Public Information	Two-Way Asymmetric	Two Way Symmetric
Dates	1820-1920	1904-1920	1920-1980	1980-
Purpose	To Propagandize A Cause	To Disseminate Needs	To Scientifically Persuade Giving	To Reach Mutual Understanding
Nature of Communication	One-way; truth not essential; dependent on emotions	One-way; truth important; dependent on "enlightenment"	Two-way; unbalanced effects; dependent on strategic positioning	Two-way; balanced effects; dependent on congruency
Communication Model	Source --> Rec.	Source --> Rec.	Source --> Rec. <-- Feedback	Group --> Group <--
Nature of Research	Little; evaluative of $ and donors	Little; mailing list, prospect research; evaluative of donors	Formative; evaluative of $	Formative; evaluative of enhancement & protection of autonomy
Leading Historical	Ward-Pierce-Y School	Bishop Lawrence/ Ivy L. Lee	John Price Jones	Few Professional Leaders
Where Practiced Today	Natl Health & Social Agencies, Religious Org.	Cultural Org., Public Colleges, Conservation/ Wildlife	Private Ed, Hosp/Medical Ctrs, Public Universities Consultants	Some universities, some consultants
Estimated Percentage of Organizations Practicing Today	50%	15%	30%	5%

*Adapted from Grunig & Hunt (1984)

1) the press agentry/publicity model; 2) the public information model; 3) the two-way asymmetric model, and 4) the two-way symmetric model.

The oldest model and the one most commonly practiced today is the press agentry/publicity model. Starting with P. T. Barnum in the 1830s, public relations practitioners have sought to get the name of their organizations or clients before the general public, usually through the mass media. The purpose of this model (i.e., the function it provides for its organization) is propaganda. The second model, which can be attributed to Ivy Lee's work at the beginning of this century, is the public information model. This model places the public relations function in the role of in-house journalist with a primary purpose of disseminating factual information to the various publics interested in the organization. The third model, which the father of public relations, Edward L. Bernays, is credited with starting in the 1920s, is the two-way asymmetric model whose purpose is scientific persuasion. Although similar in purpose to the press agentry model, the two-way asymmetric model uses social science theory and research on attitudes and behavior to help organizations sell products, create a desired image, and persuade publics to accept the company line.

The fourth model, which has emerged since the 1960s through the work of various educators, is the two-way symmetric model. This model uses research not only to shape messages, but also to position the organization in harmony with its important publics. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), practitioners of this model "serve as mediators between organizations and their publics," with a goal of mutual understanding (p. 22). Grunig and Grunig (1989) explain by saying, "'Two-way symmetrical' public relations departments use bargaining, negotiating, and conflict-resolution strategies to bring symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both the organization and its publics" (p. 31).

Significantly, it is another public relations educator who provides the primary source for documenting the historical models of fund raising. Scott Cutlip's 1965 book, *Fund Raising in the United States*, is--according to Layton (1987)--"the only comprehensive history of American

fundraising" (p. 173). This seminal work provides an historical perspective of how fund raising has been practiced since colonial days and up until the early 1960s.

Since the first recorded effort to raise private gifts in the United States was for Harvard in 1641 (Curti & Nash, 1965), the oldest model of fund raising--the press agentry model--traces its roots to the fund-raising-like activities of America's early colleges and universities. Starting with the colonial period, Cutlip (1965) states, "Appeals to the general public by means of subscription lists and lotteries brought the infant colleges some funds. Occasional bequests brought in a bit more" (p. 5). In addition to subscriptions and lotteries, colleges and universities up through the nineteenth century used bazaars and church suppers to raise lower-level, operating gifts. They also employed what Cutlip refers to as "begging letters," to solicit major gifts from wealthy individuals (p. 7). All of these fund-raising techniques are still used today, particularly by those charitable organizations practicing the press agentry model.

Secretaries of the YMCA refined the press agentry model and brought its full effect onto the fund-raising scene in the first years of the twentieth century. According to Cutlip (1965), "The whirlwind, intensive campaign to raise large sums of money in a short period of time by bombarding the public with surefire appeals and by recruiting scores of volunteers to solicit many times their number had its origins in the Young Men's Christian Association" (p. 38). Saying that the "campaign method" produced larger sums than any known means of fund raising, Cutlip states, "The innovators were Charles Sumner Ward and Lyman L. Pierce, two young imaginative and ambitious Y.M.C.A. secretaries (p. 26).

The first dramatic evidence of the "Y School" and its use of the press agentry model of fund raising was provided in 1905 by YMCA efforts in Washington, D.C. Within just 10 years, the Y-fund raisers increased the YMCA's assets in Washington from $35 million--which had taken 55 years to accumulate--to $60 million, or a 271 percent increase in one-fifth the time. Its characteristics were easily recognizable: a short-time period, an army of volunteers, a competitive atmosphere, gimmicks--such as a clock--to apply time and money pressure on

volunteers and prospective donors, and a great deal of emotion. According to Cutlip (1965), Ward's strategy for getting funds donated to public causes "lay in organized and keen work concentrated into a small period of time" (p. 41). Ward, himself, called his way of practicing fund raising as the "intensive method" (cited in Cutlip, p. 82).

As summarized in Table 1, the purpose of the press agentry model is to propagandize a cause. The table further shows that the nature of communication for the press agentry model is one-way, with truth not being an essential factor, and communication being dependent on emotions. Little research is conducted by practitioners of this model, and its leading historical figures are Charles Sumner Ward, Lyman Pierce, and their YMCA associates. It is estimated that 50 percent of all charitable organizations practice the press agentry model, particularly health and social service agencies, and religious organizations.

According to Cutlip (1965), "In the 1905-1915 decade Ward and those using his tightly organized methods succeeded in raising some $60 million in capital funds for the [YMCA]" (p. 82). In addition, the new federations of charitable organizations forming during that same time period adopted the press agentry model. Headed by publicists, who were frequently referred to as good propagandists, the federations concentrated on getting their names before the public through the mass media. Saying that there was "understandable concern about the publicist's exploitation of the fear motive," Cutlip states, "Yet something as new, as flamboyant, and as tainted with overtones of 'press agentry' . . . would naturally draw the fire of many conservative businessmen and publicity-shy social workers" (p. 81). Bogen (cited in Cutlip) wrote in 1917, "This, naturally, carries publicity to an extreme and may, unless judiciously presented, do harm, injuring the very elements whom the Charities are to serve" (p. 80).

At the same time that Ward and Pierce were launching their short-term, intensive campaign method in Washington, D.C., Cutlip (1965) says, "Another pioneer fund raiser was setting out to raise a really big sum, $2.5 million by *an entirely different approach*" (p. 50, emphasis added). As Grunig and Hunt (1984) explain, the public relations models did not

supersede each other by chronological years, but rather public relations evolved through stages toward maturity. The emergence of a new model did not mean the demise of a previous stage, which explains why all four models are still in practice today. This staged progression is evident in the history of fund raising as well.

Bishop William Lawrence's approach to fund raising, which is defined here as the public information model, was first demonstrated in 1904 in a campaign to raise funds for faculty salaries at Harvard. Describing his approach to fund raising, Lawrence states:

> We were agreed as to certain principles. The friends of the University were to be given an *opportunity* to strengthen the College by the increase of the salaries of the teachers. . . . There was to be no crowding or jamming for subscriptions. It were better not to complete the full amount. (cited in Cutlip, 1965, p. 52, emphasis added)

As can be concluded from the above description, Lawrence's approach was quite different than that of Ward and Pierce, who, as Cutlip (1965) says, "exulted in their dramatic, last-minute push to meet a goal deadline by a fixed date and hour" (p. 52). In 1916, Bishop Lawrence launched the largest campaign up to that date when he organized a drive to raise over $5 million for the Church Pension Fund Campaign, a national effort to support the clergy of the Episcopal Church and their families. Worried about publicity for his campaign, Lawrence was advised by a successful magazine editor to "depict, describe your pathetic cases," because, the editor said, "People give when their sympathies are touched" (cited in Cutlip, p. 96). "Elated by this guidance from a distinguished editor, Lawrence returned to New York," according to Cutlip, "and invited Ivy Lee to his office for a conference" (p. 96). Lee, the father of the public information model of public relations, rejected the editor's advice, telling Lawrence that repeated cries for appeals had made it impossible to depict an old parson or his widow and orphan in such a way as to move people to contribute. He said:

> The sympathies of the American people are bruised and raw with the cr[ies]. . . . Moreover, in the long run emotional appeals lose their force. The American people, intelligent, just, and generous to a cause that appeals to them want facts and figures. (cited in Cutlip, 1965, pp. 96-97)

Lee's advice on fund raising was congruent with the publicity policy he had developed of "the public be informed" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 33). That is to say, people will give, not because of emotional appeals or an intense, pressured campaign, but because they have all the facts and figures they need to reach the rational decision to give. Together, Ivy Lee and Bishop Lawrence developed the public information model of fund raising that would be applied to the $5-million Church Pension Fund. "And a campaign of publicity based on facts more than on emotion is what these two shrewd students of public behavior agreed upon in conferences over the next week," states Cutlip (1965, p. 97).

As summarized in Table 1, the purpose of the public information model of fund raising is to disseminate needs information. Whereas the press agentry model is dependent on emotions, the public information model relies upon "enlightenment" (i.e., the model is dependent on a rational, intelligent, and compassionate donor public). The nature of communication is one-way, and in contrast to the press agentry model, truth is important. Little research is conducted by practitioners using this model aside from research on prospective donors and on mailing lists. Fund-raising results are evaluated primarily by the number of donors who contribute, although total dollars raised is considered important.

Describing the activities of what students of public relations would recognize as a journalist-in-residence, Cutlip (1965) says that Bishop Lawrence took advantage of slow news days during which to place stories; he added a local angle by having each bishop make an announcement in his own diocese; he pulled together nationwide, simultaneous publicity; he saturated New York City by deluging the newspapers with facts on the problem of retirement, in general; and by simply adding the name of his organization to the release, he linked his cause to a broader issue of concern on the media's agenda (i.e., provision for all elderly citizens) which helped ensure headline coverage.

One and one-half years after the formal announcement of Lawrence's drive on March 1, 1916, the Church Pension Fund Campaign had reached $8.75 million--making philanthropic

history. According to Cutlip, "Bishop Lawrence had established himself, on the eve of World War I, as America's champion fund raiser" (p. 99).

Yet, the new record was shortly and soundly broken by the press agentry model that Ward and Pierce brought to the Red Cross during World War I. Just four months after the official close of the Church Pension Fund, the Red Cross raised *$114 million in eight days*!

Under its self-imposed charge to, "Bind up the wounds of a bleeding world," the American Red Cross War Council hired "the champion money-raiser" Ward, who--with Pierce--served for the duration of the war on loan from the YMCA (Cutlip, 1965, p. 112). Cutlip describes this first Red Cross drive by stating:

> Pulpit, press, and people responded in the fervor of war-born emotions. . . . History had been made as the American people saw what large sums could be attained through the intensive fund-raising campaign hitherto used only at the community level for charity or a civic or church building. (p. 116)

As Cutlip notes, "The total collected represented more than one dollar for every man, woman, and child in the United States" (p. 119).

As World War I only lasted 19 months, it is truly amazing that, in total, the Ward-directed campaigns during the war raised more than $690 million (Cutlip, 1965). This figure is even more impressive when one realizes that at the same time Americans also gave $13.9 billion through five drives for Liberty Loans. Although the results are impressive, it must be stressed that the press agentry model, as practiced by Ward and Pierce during World War I, rested on a foundation of pressure, competition, emotion, and even coercion. Again describing the first Red Cross campaign, Cutlip states:

> A quota was set for each city, town, and hamlet to give it a goal to reach. . . . City was matched against city in the fund-raising competition--an old technique of Ward's. . . . All media vied to *promote the cause* of the Red Cross and thus prove their patriotism. As the Kansas City *Star* thundered, "Kansas City must have no slackers." (p. 117, emphasis added)

Although Grunig and Hunt (1984) say that the Creel Committee on Public Information gave rise to the two-way asymmetric model of public relations, the two-way asymmetric model

of fund raising did not emerge from the similar work of the Red Cross during World War I, but from the work of John Price Jones at the close of the war. As Cutlip (1965) states:

> Jones came from the world of journalism to bring *a new approach* and new intensity to the art of getting people to give money. He developed a lucrative fund-raising business quite independent of the influence and ideas of the Ward-Pierce-Y school. (p. 170, emphasis added)

Like Bernays, who Grunig and Hunt (1984) describe as "the most celebrated of the third generation of public relations practitioners" (p. 41), Jones used research to "sell" the philanthropic needs of his organizational clients, netting them a total of $746.63 million over his 31 years of work as a fund-raising consultant. Cutlip describes Jones' two-way asymmetric model of practicing fund raising, stating:

> Jones's fetish for research, for careful record keeping, and for thorough planning made the methodical Charles S. Ward appear slovenly and haphazard by comparison. Jones brought to fund raising a deep appreciation for the value of research and planning, an increased emphasis on public relations, and in his penchant for paper work he codified the principles and procedures of fund raising. The London *Economist* has called him "the most famous of the expert fund-raisers." (p. 170)

In relation to Jones' "fetish for research," it is important to note that research is used in the two-way asymmetric model to shape messages that are attractive to donor publics. Cutlip quotes one of the recommendations made by a Jones executive, saying, "Greater care must be taken insofar as the larger givers are concerned to determine interests and attitudes so as to make the most effective appeal along the avenue of least resistance" (p. 318).

Jones, who was a newspaper reporter for almost 15 years, officially launched his fund-raising career after the Armistice when he took on a temporary fund-raising position at his alma mater, Harvard University. According to Cutlip (1965), "When the campaign to raise $10 million for the Harvard Endowment Fund was launched, it not only made fund-raising history but changed the course of American higher education, for Harvard was dramatically telling the nation and sister colleges that the old methods of financing higher education in America were passe" (p. 173). The campaign for Harvard raised $14.2 million in less than one year.

In November 1919, Jones incorporated his commercial fund-raising firm, the John Price Jones Co., which advanced the two-way asymmetric model of fund raising. Describing Jones' approach, Cutlip (1965) says, "He undergirded fund appeals, from the early twenties on, with thorough research on the institution to be served, its degree of support, and the case to be presented in the fund appeal" (p. 183). Curti and Nash (1965) report that Jones' fund-raising campaigns for six women's colleges "began with careful planning, including a survey of the needs of the colleges and of the social and economic status of alumnae and other potential donors. . . .Special attention was given to the kind of publicity likely to be most effective in view of the traditions of the college and the psychology and values of the alumnae" (p. 204).

As summarized in Table 1, the two-way asymmetric model of fund raising first appeared in 1920. The purpose of the model is to scientifically persuade giving, and the nature of communication is two-way, with unbalanced, or asymmetric effects. This third-generation model is dependent on strategic positioning with publics and uses formative research to shape communications. It is hypothesized that 30 percent of all charitable organizations actively involved in fund raising today practice the two-way asymmetric model. It is further hypothesized that this model is predominately practiced by private colleges, private and public universities, hospitals and medical centers, and by most fund-raising consultants.

Finally, it must be noted that, like the press agentry model of fund raising, the two-way asymmetric model has been criticized historically. For example, Cutlip (1965) says, "Evidence of a deepening resentment of what John Price Jones called the 'scientific method of raising funds' began to appear in the mid-twenties and has grown into the crescendo of criticism of the never-ending list of money appeals we hear so frequently today" (p. 330).

This paper does not identify any leading historical figure as being associated with the most recent fund-raising model, the two-way symmetric model, which is a situation similar to that in public relations. Grunig and Hunt (1984) explain that the reason it is more difficult to trace the historic origins of the two-way symmetric model to any individuals is "because

practitioners only now are beginning to practice the model" (pp. 41-42). This paper concludes that the two-way symmetric model of fund raising is a very new phenomenon, emerging only in this decade. There is, however, some historical evidence of the model in the literature (i.e., symmetrical concepts can be identified in the history of fund raising).

For example, the fund-raising philosophy and practice of Harvard University in the second half of the 1800s under the presidency of Charles Eliot can be interpreted as early signs of the two-way symmetric model. Harvard, according to Curti and Nash (1965), was open to change, unlike its peer institutions of the time. President Eliot, who believed that donors should express interest before being asked for a gift, based his success in fund raising on always having "his plans so clearly shaped that these would appeal to a man who might be interested" (Curti & Nash, p. 138). Curti and Nash describe Eliot's approach to fund raising, saying:

> On occasion he pointed out to industrialists that a needed laboratory might well yield new knowledge highly useful to their businesses. For the most part, however, Eliot emphasized Harvard's contributions to public service, making clear what was wanted and why it was needed. (p. 138)

It should be noted that Harvard's endowment tripled between 1869 and 1878 and tripled again in the next 20 years under Eliot's leadership.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) say that, historically, few public relations practitioners practiced the symmetric model, although many defined the function as such. As a result, these scholars say, educators have done the most to define how the two-way symmetric model should be practiced. It is argued here that the same situation exists for fund raising. As summarized in Table 1, the purpose of the two-way symmetric model of fund raising is to reach mutual understanding. The nature of its communication is two-way between groups with balanced, or symmetrical effects. This characteristic is important in that the nature of communication for the other three models is graphically portrayed in Table 1 as source to receiver. The nature of communication for the two-way symmetric model, however, is group to group, which emphasizes its orientation to systems theory and the environmental interdependencies of donors and

charitable organizations. Unlike the press agentry model of fund raising, which is dependent on the emotions of its publics, or the public information model, which is dependent on their enlightenment, the two-way symmetric model is dependent on congruency with its donor publics. This most recent model uses formative research to balance the needs of the charitable organization and its donor publics (i.e., research is used to identify opportunities for private funding and to identify issues that the charitable organization is not addressing through donor relationships). The effectiveness of this model is evaluated by its contribution to enhancing and protecting organizational autonomy through the fund-raising process. It is hypothesized that only 5 percent of all charitable organizations practice this model.

Evidence can be found in the fund-raising and philanthropy literature that these four models continue to be used by organizations today. For example, Payton (1987) stresses the predominance of the press agentry model--which is dependent upon emotion--when he states:

> Manipulation of emotion for various purposes is practiced on a national and even world-wide scale . . . .Philanthropy, after all, is the product of persuasion, not of logical demonstration. The abuses of rhetorical technique in a good cause are so familiar as to be commonplace. (p. 41)

Cutlip (1965) adds, "Use of the emotional rather than the education approach to getting money for popular philanthropy continues, though perhaps not to the same extent as was practiced in the early 1920's" (p. 236).

In his study of 22 donors of $1 million or more and 1,000 fund-raising practitioners, Panas (1984) summarizes the two-way asymmetric model of fund raising and its purpose of scientific persuasion through research when he says:

> Individuals require their own needs to be met. Listen carefully. See how you can mold the needs of the potential donor to the opportunities of the proposed program. . . . The trick is in making certain that what they want most is what you want most. (p. 172)

Cutlip (1965) adds, "The carefully organized campaign. . .that carefully pinpoints prospects, organizes their solicitation, and build a psychological climate that compels people to give is now a fixture of American philanthropy" (p. 538).

With the dominance of the press agentry model in mind, the paper now turns to theories of strategic public relations management and how they can be used to critique the current principles and practices of measuring fund-raising effectiveness by dollars raised.

A central concept of strategic public relations, according to Grunig and Grunig (1989) is that when practitioners identify issues that are important to their organizations, they segment those strategic publics that are most likely to enhance or limit autonomy in relation to that issue, identify objectives for communication programs, plan and execute those programs, and evaluate the effects of the programs on members of the segmented publics (i.e., whether the programs achieved their set objectives). In their resource dependence perspective, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) say that effectiveness is an external measure and is a question of socio-political support, while the ratio of resources used to output produced is efficiency, a quantitative, internal measure. Therefore, in soliciting and accepting gifts, charitable organizations should be concerned not so much with the dollars raised (i.e., the internal measurement of efficiency) but with the impact those dollars have on the effectiveness of the organizations as perceived and externally measured by the various groups that are most concerned with its activities (i.e., those publics that are most likely to enhance or limit autonomy, such as donors and legislators).

Current principles of the effectiveness of fund raising, however, concentrate on measuring the total dollars raised, sometimes in comparison to fund-raising potential and/or cost (e.g., Pickett, 1977, 1981; Dunn & Hutten, 1985; Duronio & Loessin, 1989; Loessin, Duronio, & Borton, 1988). Such a concentration on indiscriminant dollars ignores the concept of gift utility and the fact that gifts can enhance organizational autonomy by supporting self-determined goals or limit autonomy by displacing goals and/or the means to achieving those goals. Fund-raising practitioners contribute to organizational effectiveness when they solicit and accept gifts in support of organizational goals and when they refuse to accept gifts that would limit autonomy. In addition, fund raising is effective when it helps a charitable organization manage environmental interdependencies with donor publics that may threaten the organization's

autonomy. By helping charities recognize such threats and respond to potential conflicts, fund raising supports the need of the organization to maintain equilibrium with its environment.

Current measures of effectiveness prohibit fund raisers from contributing to organizational effectiveness since their performance is measured not by what they contribute to organizational goals--including autonomy--but only by increased dollar amounts. In effect, charitable organizations are evaluating fund raising by internal measurements of efficiency rather than by external measurements of effectiveness. Such short-sightedness may lead to increased threats on their autonomy by members of their multiple constituencies.

The theory of donor relations developed in this paper advocates a normative, three-step process for measuring the effectiveness of fund raising. It recommends that fund-raising effectiveness be evaluated by: 1) measuring the impact of giving on the charitable organization (i.e., to what degree did gifts enhance or limit organizational autonomy?); 2) measuring impact of giving on donors (i.e., to what degree did gifts satisfy the objectives of donors?); and 3) measuring the impact of giving on other strategic publics of the organization (i.e., to what degree did gifts help the charitable organization fulfill the expectations of key publics other than donors?). Moving down one level of abstraction, the theory recommends that charitable organizations measure the effectiveness of fund raising by assigning values to specific gifts in relation to their utility for the organization, by adopting a three-year time period on which to measure effects, and by utilizing process evaluation to provide a continual measurement of the effectiveness of specific programs and the performance of fund-raising practitioners.

The neglect of environmental interdependencies and the concept of autonomy by current principles of fund-raising effectiveness leads finally to a discussion of presuppositions about fund raising.

Grunig's (1989a; in preparation; Grunig & White, in preparation) presuppositions about public relations are used as an analytical tool to examine worldviews of the role of fund raising in society. While the earlier analysis of models addressed the question of *how* charities practice

fund raising differently, this analysis answers the research question: *Why* do charitable organizations practice fund raising in different ways? As emphasized by Grunig (in preparation), the understanding of presuppositions is a critical, and often missing, step in building and applying theory. He says that different presuppositions make up worldviews "about the nature of truth, of society, of right or wrong, or simply of how things work in the world."

Grunig and White (in preparation) describe four worldviews, based on assumptions about public relations' social role, that help explain the presuppositions that shape the practice of fund raising: 1) pragmatic (the social role of fund raising is to help charitable organizations raise money); 2) conservative (its social role is to maintain an elitist socio-economic system); 3) radical (its role leads to social improvement and reform through the transformation of private resources into public good); and 4) idealistic (its social role is to manage interdependence and conflict between an organization and its resource providers).

Many practitioners hold one of the three worldviews of fund raising as serving a pragmatic, conservative, or radical social role, which are asymmetrical worldviews. According to Grunig (1989a), "When. . .practitioners hold an asymmetrical worldview, they presuppose that the organization knows best" (p. 32). It is further assumed by those holding an asymmetrical worldview that the public would benefit by cooperating with the organization. In other words, an asymmetrical worldview of fund raising holds that the donor benefits from giving because the recipient organization benefits (i.e., the fund-raising effects are unbalanced). Illustrating the predominant asymmetrical worldview, Panas (1984) quotes a college president who describes fund raising as "the art of plucking the goose to obtain the largest amount of feathers, with the least possible amount of hissing," (p. 84).

Asymmetrical presuppositions generally have led to a dominance of asymmetrical models of fund raising today (i.e., the press agentry, public information, and two-way asymmetric models of fund raising are based on asymmetrical presuppositions). These models, which primarily measure fund-raising effectiveness by dollars raised, are supported by principles that

are based on flawed assumptions. In practice, asymmetrical presuppositions result in unrealistic demands on the fund-raising function and encourage unethical and socially irresponsible behavior, which, in turn, may lead to increased government regulation. For example, the big-dollar results of fund raising recently have thrust the function into the public spotlight more so than ever in the past, prompting questions about the "greediness" of charitable organizations ("Carnegie's 'Gospel of Wealth,'" 1989). Frustration and cynicism on the part of donors and public officials are raising questions about professional and ethical conduct that already have resulted in investigations and increased regulations, which one state charity regulator describes as an "'unheard of' flurry of activity" ("States Modify Laws," 1989, p. 1).

Following Grunig's (1989a) conclusion about asymmetrical public relations, it is asserted that the asymmetric models of fund raising largely have been unsuccessful in managing interdependencies with donors, while the two-way symmetric model, which has been under-utilized, promises greater effectiveness, as well as a higher degree of ethics and social responsibility. Pragmatically speaking, fund-raising programs based on asymmetrical presuppositions may not be as successful in raising large numbers of dollars as generally thought. For example, Coldren (1982) found that of 116 campaigns completed in the second half of the 1970s, 12 percent of the campaigns for public institutions and 21 percent of the campaigns for private institutions failed to meet their goals. A recent membership survey by NSFRE (1989) shows that *at least* 35.8 percent--and possibly as many as 63.1 percent--of these fund-raising practitioners did not meet their fund-raising goals in each of the last five years.

The literature provides warnings that asymmetrical fund raising--which promises powerful results for the good of the charitable organization--can cost money, rather than saving money through the protection of autonomy. Reviewing his 20 years as a fund raiser, Smith (1982) says, "I see far too many gifts that ended up costing too much." (p. 36). Lawson (1988) says, "Some gifts should not be accepted. The ramifications of soliciting and accepting a gift that compromises an institution's mission could undermine future support for years to come" (p. 60).

The paper concludes that symmetrical presuppositions about fund raising, as defined by Grunig and White's (in preparation) idealistic worldview, are desirable, and charitable organizations should adopt the two-way symmetric model of fund raising to effectively manage external interdependencies with foundation, corporate, and individual donors.

A Theory of Donor Relations: Conclusions

The theory of donor relations, which reorients fund raising within the paradigm of public relations, provides a fuller understanding of the fund raising function--one that promises to help fund-raising practitioners and their charitable organizations carry out this important function more effectively and solve the problems outlined at the beginning of this paper. The following are propositions that are drawn from the theory developed in this paper. The theory of donor relations encourages practitioners to:

- recognize the tensions inherent in the interdependencies of an organization with its donor publics;
- consider potential loss of autonomy as a primary factor in negotiating the purposes and conditions of major gifts and in planning annual giving programs for lower-level gifts;
- prioritize fund-raising programs and activities by institutional agendas;
- decline gifts that are inappropriate to the organization's goals or that will limit the organization's means to pursue its internally determined goals (i.e., gifts that "cost" too much to accept);
- evaluate the results of fund-raising programs, not by dollar totals or by inter-organizational comparison, but by how much the programs contributed to organizational effectiveness; and
- research, plan, execute, and evaluate fund-rasing activities with the understanding that donors are not an organization's only public (i.e., in dynamic environments, organizational problems change and strategic publics may also change so that donors may at times be less important than other publics of the organization [e.g., legislators, or faculty]).

In conclusion, the theory of donor relations promises to expand and enhance the field of public relations and to provide scholars with multiple opportunities for future research. More importantly, the theory offers answers to the important problems described in the beginning of this paper and provides practitioners with new concepts to guide their fund-raising behavior and help them be more effective in an ethically and socially responsible manner.

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Memory for Investor Relations Messages:

An Information Processing Experiment

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ABSTRACT

Using the context of investor relations, this study tests Grunig's situational theory by applying cognitive psychological, experimental methods rarely used in public relations research. The effects of involvement, problem recognition and constraint recognition on memory performance of subjects were measured. Little support was found for using the situational theory to define active and passive publics with respect to memory performance. Constraint recognition and involvement had limited effects, but the effect for constraint recognition directly contradicted what would be predicted by the situational theory.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The present study serves as a controlled experimental test of the validity of Grunig's situational theory that three variables are effective in segmenting audiences. An information processing experiment was conducted to test the efficacy of the situational variables (involvement, problem recognition and constraint recognition) as predictors of memory performance.

The study was intended to strengthen theory-testing in public relations research in several ways. First, the experimental method provides a convergent validity test for Grunig's situational theory and provides evidence for controlled testing of the causal force of this public relations theory. Such experimental evidence has been virtually absent in public relations research.[1]

Second, this study employs the most recent methods and concepts from cognitive psychology to examine memory performance as a function of the situational variables (involvement, problem recognition and constraint recognition). However, in an attempt to address problems of external and ecological validity, the stimulus materials for the experiment are naturally occurring and far more complex than those typical in cognitive psychology. Third, the stimulus materials presented in this experiment are

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[1]John V. Pavlik, Public Relations: What Research Tells Us (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1987), p. 41.

pairs of sentences pertaining to investor relations. Messages from investor relations were chosen because this important public relations specialty has mainly been treated as a subject of legal research and not as a subject of persuasion research. More importantly, the specialty makes a strong commitment to disclosure and information transfer, and is therefore an appropriate context for memory research.

Memory Research and the Situational Theory

Since the 1960's, there has been a growing recognition that cognitive effects are a worthy subject of study.[2] Not only are cognitive effects important mediators of attitudinal and behavioral effects, but they are regularly an ultimate goal in public relations practice. In essence, memory performance of the audience is highly important to public relations practitioners, yet largely neglected in public relations research.

Grunig's program of research includes some study of the cognitive domain, even though it appears that the most widely tested dependent variable in the program of research on the situational theory is information seeking. Although information seeking could be construed as a cognitive effect, it is more typically operationalized as intention to behave as elicited

[2]Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984).

using self-report measures.[3]

The use of memory performance in the current study offers a measurement of actual behavior, namely information processing behavior recorded as it occurs. Measuring memory performance avoids problems of introspective self-report of mental states, self-report of transitory thoughts about a topic, and prospective self-report of future behavior that have been found to be unreliable.[4]

Aside from the likelihood of error occurring when subjects use introspective self-report of mental states, the relationship between information seeking and subsequent mental processing is tenuous. One cannot assume that a person's subsequent cognitive performance will correspond in any consistent way with a person's rating of how likely he or she is to send for information about a topic. Little evidence has been provided in the mass communication research literature that expressing a likelihood of

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[3]James E. Grunig, "Defining Publics in Public Relations: The Case of the Suburban Hospital," Journalism Quarterly, 55, pp. 109-118; James E. Grunig, "Reconstruction of a situational theory of communication: Internal and external concepts as identifiers of publics for AIDS," Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, OR, 1988; J. E. Grunig, C. L. Nelson, S. J. Richburg, & T. J. White. Communication by agricultural publics: Internal and external orientations. Journalism Quarterly, 65 (1988), pp. 26-38; J. E. Grunig & T. Hunt, Managing public relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984).

[4]R. Lachman, J. L. Lachman & E. C. Butterfield, Cognitive Psychology and information processing: An introduction (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1979); Timothy De Camp Wilson & Richard E. Nisbett, "The Accuracy of Verbal Reports about the Effects of Stimuli on Evaluations and Behavior," Social Psychology, 41 (2), 1978, pp. 118-131.

sending for additional information about a topic necessarily leads to a difference in how subsequent information about the topic will actually be processed.[5]

Furthermore, there is a considerable body of research in cognitive psychology on incidental learning effects that runs counter to the assumption that intentions (such as intentions to seek information) predict better memory performance: "[It] has been proven over and over again in the research on intentional versus incidental learning: Whether a person intends to learn or not really does not matter ...."[6] In effect, the cognitive psychological literature casts doubt on the procedure of extrapolating from measures of information seeking to results in memory performance once the sought information is processed.[7] These findings ring a cautionary note about concluding that members of an activist group with strong intentions to seek information about a topic will remember more from messages presented about that topic than will less active publics.

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[5]S. H. Chaffee & C. Roser, "Involvement and the consistency of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors," Communication Research, 13 (1986), 373-399; Grunig, 1978, Ibid; Grunig & Hunt, Ibid; M. L. Rothschild, "Political advertising: A neglected policy issue in marketing," Journal of Marketing Research, 15 (1978), pp. 58-70; M. L. Ray, "Marketing communication and the hierarchy-of-effects", in P. Clarke (Ed.), New models for communication research (pp. 146-175), (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1973).

[6]J. R. Anderson, Cognitive psychology and its implications. (San Francisco: Freeman, 1985), p. 172.

[7]D. G. Kemler-Nelson, "The effect of intention on what concepts are acquired," Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 23 (1984), pp. 734-759.

A number of cognitive effects other than memory performance have been studied using Grunig's theory or variables included in the situational theory such as cognitive strategies of hedging and wedging[8] and levels of processing in the form of breadth and depth of cognitions.[9] But only limited findings are available concerning memory performance of persons defined as members of the various publics identified by the situational theory.

A few dependent measures in a few studies have tested memory performance as a function of the situational variables. Grunig and Bartholomew found high problem recognition and low constraint recognition predicted greater learning than other conditions.[10] Grunig used a multiple choice recognition memory item. He found that the "message retention variable does not seem to follow a meaningful pattern ..." (p. 188) with regard to the three

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[8]K. R. Stamm & J. E. Grunig, "Communication Situations and Cognitive Strategies in Resolving Environmental Issues," Journalism Quarterly, 54 (1977), pp. 713-720; J. E. Grunig & K. R. Stamm, "Cognitive Strategies and the Resolution of Environmental Issues: A Second Study," Journalism Quarterly, 56 (1979), pp. 715-726.

[9]J. E. Grunig, "Reconstruction of a situational theory of communication: Internal and external concepts as identifiers of publics for AIDS, a paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, OR, 1988; J. E. Grunig & D. A. Ipes, "The anatomy of a campaign against drunken driving," Public Relations Review, 9, 2 (1983), pp. 36-52.

[10]C. M. Bartholomew, "Cognitive Effects from Using Analogies to Communicate Physics to Audiences in Different Decision Situations," Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park cited in Grunig, Ibid; J. E. Grunig, "Three Stopping Experiments on the Communication of Science," Journalism Quarterly, 51 (1974), pp. 387-399.

situational variables but did correlate moderately with the situational variables in a canonical correlation. Grunig stated:

> "The theory was somewhat less successful in explaining when publics would retain messages, form cognitions, and make evaluations than it was in explaining communication behavior and overt behavior. People, it seems, often randomly retain messages ...." (p.196).[11]

Both Grunig's own work on memory effects and the vast body of cognitive psychological literature suggest a complex relationship between factors indicating intention to process information and subsequent memory performance. These findings make memory effects an interesting but problematic aspect of the situational theory.

To evaluate the problem, memory performance must be considered as a multidimensional variable. Both recall and recognition memory should be used as dependent measures. In a free recall task, the subject attempts to reproduce the memory set, the original stimulus items. This requires both search and retrieval of memory traces. In a recognition task, the subject identifies a given item as being from the memory set or not.[12] The subject searches long-term memory, but with the aid of reference to the test item to match it with memory traces. Retrieval need not occur. A cued recall task lies between a free

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[11] J. E. Grunig, "The Message-Attitude-Behavior Relationship: Communication Behaviors of Organizations," Communication Research, 9 (2), (1982), pp. 163-200.

[12] J. G. Snodgrass, G. Levy-Berger & M. Haydon, Human experimental psychology, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1985).

recall and a recognition task. Retrieval is required but search is enhanced by reference to the cue, a portion of the to-be-recalled material. The subject's task is to complete the memory set by searching memory for the appropriate response and retrieving it. An example of a cued recall task would be a sentence completion exercise.

Evidence from cognitive psychological and consumer research literature indicates that differences in the type of memory performance, i.e. recall vs. recognition memory are important. First, independent variables can have different effects on different types of memory performance.[13] Second, several deleterious effects have been found for involvement and prior knowledge (conceivably related to problem recognition) that are particular to recall performance and not to recognition. Proactive interference[14] and diffusion of activation[15] can reduce recall scores. Proactive interference occurs when memory traces related to the test item interfere with the search for the test item. Diffusion effects occur when extensive memory networks are activated due to high motivation. Activation energy needed to search memory is diffused throughout this extensive network,

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[13] S. N. Singh & M. L. Rothschild, "Recognition as a Measure of Learning from Television Commercials," Journal of Marketing Research, XX (1983), pp. 235-248.

[14] R. R. Burke & T. K. Srull, "Competitive interference and consumer memory for advertising," Journal of Consumer Research, 15 (1988), pp. 55-68.

[15] Anderson, Op cit.

resulting in insufficient activation of the test item in memory. Diffusion is probably at work when one senses an answer is on the tip of the tongue but not quite retrievable.[16]

On the other hand, the forward/backward search logarithm helps to explain higher recognition memory scores.[17] Subjects can search for a close match in memory, zeroing in on the correct memory trace using a forward/backward search of memory networks. Because differences are predicted in this study, both recognition and cued recall memory are measured.

This study, then, offers an experimental test of Grunig's situational theory with regard to memory performance. It moves away from measures of cognitive strategy, cognitive response and behavioral intention to evaluate actual memory performance as a function of the situational variables. Segmenting audiences into active and passive publics with respect to attitudinal and behavioral measures is worthwhile. But a theory in public relations, a field often focused on disseminating information, should also define publics likely to exhibit enhanced memory performance for a campaign message. Because such predictive power has not always been found in mass communication and cognitive psychological studies, the following hypotheses merit testing.

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[16] A. L. Glass & K. J. Holyoak, Cognition (2nd ed.). (New York: Random House, 1986).

[17] G. Wolford, "Function of distinct associations for paired-associate performance," Psychological Review, 73 (1971), pp. 303-313.

Hypotheses

H #1: Each of the three variables in the situational theory will offer a statistically significant main effect. High levels of involvement and problem recognition and low levels of constraint recognition will each result in higher cued recall and recognition memory scores. High involvement and problem recognition and low constraint recognition combine in the theory to define an active public that is expected to exhibit higher memory performance than less active publics.

H #2: Interaction effects among the situational variables should not be found for either cued recall or recognition. High involvement, high problem recognition and low constraint recognition should have an additive effect. The situational theory does not predict that any of the variables will act differently for different levels of the other variables in the theory.

H #3: Recognition memory overall should be better than recall memory because of the effects of proactive interference and diffusion in cued recall memory search and forward/backward chaining in recognition memory search.

H #4: The difference between memory scores of active and passive publics should be significant for recognition memory but not significant for recall memory. This will be due to the mixed effects of involvement and problem recognition on cued recall, including the hampering effects of proactive interference and the diffusion of activation discussed above. As a result of the

hampering effects, differences between active and passive publics will be masked by ceiling effects for cued recall scores.

METHOD

Subjects.

One hundred forty undergraduate students enrolled in communication courses participated for extra credit.

Stimulus Materials.

Lists of facts about the following four topics served as stimulus materials: (1) University of Texas (UT) investment in precious metals; (2) oil production on UT property in West Texas; (3) UT investment in high yield, low grade bonds; (4) UT investment in load vs. no-load mutual funds. Topics were selected that undergraduate students in mass communication would know little about prior to the experiment and would find involving only because of the manipulation of their involvement within the experimental environment.

The memory set consisted of pairs of facts about the various topics such as the following.

Average yield currently for AAA bonds is 9%.
Average yield currently for BBB bonds is 12%.

All pairs presented facts that implied support for a consistent position for each topic.

Persuasive pairs of statements were chosen because they

occur naturally in magazines such as Harper's and Greenpeace and in the text of prospectuses in investor relations. Most similar to the persuasive pairs used here are messages in investor relations where, for example, the average yield of the company's stock will be juxtaposed next to that of the Standard and Poor's Index in an annual report or a prospectus. This may be done to point out by implication that the company's stock is an above-average performer. Such persuasive pairs make effective stimulus materials, not just because they are a fairly common persuasive tool in mass communication, but because their simplicity controls for extraneous variables such as rhetorical techniques in narrative forms.

Design

The design was a mixed, 2 x 2 x 2 factorial with the two between-subjects factors being problem recognition (low vs. high) and constraint recognition (low vs. high) and the one within-subjects factor being involvement (low vs. high). The design also included random presentation of stimulus materials to control for order effects.

Independent Variables

Problem recognition

The following question was asked for each of the four investment topics. "Rate how much of a problem for UT each of the following topics is. [Choices were extreme problem - a problem - neutral - no problem - no problem at all.]"

Constraint Recognition

The following question was asked for each of the four investment topics. "Rate how much you could do to influence decisions about the topic. [Choices were hi influence - some influence - neutral - little influence - no influence.]"

Involvement Involvement was operationalized by telling subjects that they were being considered for membership in well-paid focus groups sponsored by the University of Texas administration. Designation as a finalist after a series of pre-test questions was used as the manipulation for high involvement. All subjects actually were finalists for two of the four topics.

The manipulation check for involvement was a self-report rating of involvement with each of the topics, using a bipolar scale. The manipulation check was administered as a distractor task after presentation of the memory set and before the memory tasks were given.

Dependent Variables

The recognition tests to operationalize recognition memory immediately followed this brief distractor task. Subjects were presented 16 phrases and asked to press a "yes" or "no" key, depending on whether the phrase had occurred in the stimulus materials.

The cued recall variable was measured using a single, fill-in-the blank task as in the example shown below.

> "After the facts have all been presented, you will be given a cue to help you recall the gist of one of the pairs of facts. Type in the number corresponding to your choice to fill in the blank below."

Average yield currently for AAA bonds is 9%.
Average yield currently for BBB bonds is a _____percentage.

(1) smaller
(2) larger
(3) can't recall

To avoid practice effects from the recognition task which was administered first, the phrase to be completed had not been used as a probe in the recognition test. Sixteen cued recall items were used.

Recall accuracy scores were derived by dividing the number of correct responses by the total number of test items. Correct responses were coded in the data matrix as "1" and both incorrect and "can't recall" responses were coded as "0". A higher recall accuracy score represented more accurate cued recall performance. It was possible for a subject to answer incorrectly either by giving the wrong answer or by failing to recall any answer.

Procedure

Each subject was assigned randomly to one of two counterbalanced combinations of the two conditions for involvement. The order of the sentences constituting the memory set were assigned randomly to each subject.

The experiment opened with a series of attitudinal and demographic questions used in the purported process of selecting finalists for focus groups. Among these questions were the questions used to operationalize problem recognition and constraint recognition.

Subjects were then told that their memory for material pertaining to each of four topics would be tested. However, only their performance on topics for which they were a finalist would count in making the final selection.

The subjects received instructions for the memory tasks and completed a practice session before beginning the memory task. Recognition memory was tested first, followed by cued recall memory testing. The typical experimental session lasted less than 30 minutes. The final procedure was to de-brief subjects after all data had been collected for the entire experiment.

Apparatus.

A micro-computer lab using IBM XT microcomputers was used. A program was designed using the Micro Experimental Laboratory from Psychology Software Tools, Inc. to present instructions, stimulus materials and dependent measures. All counterbalancing and randomization was carried out through instructions in the program. The system recorded and computed most of the statistical analysis of the data from the experiment.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1 for both of the dependent variables. The table shows the mean score and standard deviation for each cell or combination of conditions of the three independent variables: problem recognition, constraint recognition and involvement. In addition, marginal scores for

each independent variable are presented. These scores represent means for the two conditions of one independent variable, averaged or "collapsed" across values of the other independent variable. The range of scores is not presented because for each cell in the table, scores ranged from the lowest possible score (.00) to the highest possible score (1.00).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Size of Cells

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of subjects into cells representing the various combinations of conditions of the three independent variables. Because involvement was a within-subjects factor, each subject experienced each condition of involvement, resulting in an equal N for high and low involvement.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Table 2 indicates that most respondents did not view the investment issue as a problem (110 of 140). On the other hand, most respondents indicated that they could influence investment decisions of their university (94 of 140).

Manipulation Check for Involvement

Subjects were asked to rate their level of involvement with each topic in the experiment on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "involved" and 5 being "not involved". The mean score for the high involvement group was 2.94 and for the low involvement group was 3.37. The t-test was significant [$t(562) = 3.78$, $p < .05$], providing evidence that the manipulation of involvement may have been effective.

Cued Recall Performance

It was hypothesized that accuracy of cued recall would be higher in the high involvement, high problem recognition, and low constraint recognition conditions than in the opposite conditions for each variable.

A 2 (high vs. low involvement) X 2 (high problem vs. low problem) X 2 (high constraint vs. low constraint) mixed design ANOVA did not support this hypothesis. No main effect was found for involvement [$F(1,139) = 1.87$, ns] or for problem recognition [$F(1,139) = .84$, ns]. A main effect was found for constraint recognition, but the effect was not in the hypothesized direction. Figure 1 shows that mean cued recall for subjects in the high constraint condition is better than in the low constraint condition [$F(1,139) = 4.66$, $p < .05$]. No interaction of the three independent variables was hypothesized and none was found.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Recognition Performance

It was hypothesized that accuracy of recognition would be higher in the high involvement, high problem recognition, and low constraint recognition conditions than in the opposite conditions for each variable.

A 2 (high vs. low involvement) X 2 (high problem vs. low problem) X 2 (high constraint vs. low constraint) mixed design ANOVA provided partial support for the hypothesis. As hypothesized, Figure 2 shows that the mean recognition score for subjects in the high involvement condition is better than in the low involvement condition [$F(1,139) = 2.83$, $p < .10$]. A main effect was also found for constraint recognition but as with the cued recall performance, the effect of constraint recognition ran counter to the hypothesis. Figure 3 shows that the mean recognition score for subjects in the high constraint recognition condition is better than in the low constraint condition [$F(1,139) = 2.77$, $p < .10$]. No main effect was found for problem recognition. No interaction of the three independent variables was hypothesized and none was found.

[Insert Figures 2 and 3 about here]

Comparison of Memory Performance of Active and Passive Publics

As noted, the situational theory does not predict interaction effects, and no significant interactions were found.

But the theory does predict an additive effect such that single variables might have no significant effect whereas cumulatively the variables would have an effect. The combination of high involvement, high problem recognition and low constraint recognition defines an active public while the opposite conditions define a passive public. To compare the memory performance of active and passive publics while avoiding Type I error, a minimal number of t-tests were done for recognition and cued recall memory performance.

The results of a grouped t-test to compare the cued recall memory performance of active and passive publics were not significant [t (37) = .83, ns]. The same was true for recognition memory performance of active and passive publics [t (30) = .18, ns].

Because constraint recognition was a significant factor for cued recall (<.05) and recognition (<.10) but in a counter-theoretical way, a second t-test was done excluding constraint recognition to examine the effects of involvement and problem recognition alone. Neither the results for cued recall [t (39) = .25, ns] nor for recognition [t (37) = -.29, ns] memory performance of active and passive publics defined without using constraint recognition were significant.

Comparison of Recognition and Cued Recall Memory Performance

Comparison of the effects of the three independent variables on the two types of dependent measures was made. Once again a

limited number of t-tests was done to evaluate theoretically based hypotheses. One predicted difference between recognition and cued recall memory was that recognition scores would be higher than cued recall scores collapsed over all conditions of all three variables (overall scores). Differences in overall memory scores were evaluated using paired t-tests. The results of a paired t-test to compare overall memory performance as a function of task (cued recall vs. recognition) was significant [$t(139) = 4.57$, $p < .001$]. The overall mean for recognition memory (.74) was higher than the overall mean for cued recall (.67).

The second analysis was intended to evaluate whether the situational variables were better predictors of recognition memory performance or cued recall performance for the active public. Using the levels of the three variables defining active publics (high involvement, high problem recognition, low constraint recognition), a paired t-test was done to compare recognition and recall scores for subjects predicted to be in the active public. The results of a paired t-test to compare memory performance of the active public as a function of task (cued recall vs. recognition) was not significant [$t(20) = 1.43$, ns].

Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis #1 was partially supported. Involvement had a significant effect on recognition memory as hypothesized. Constraint recognition exhibited a significant main effect for both recognition and cued recall. However, the effects of

constraint recognition ran counter to the hypothesis.

Hypothesis #2 was partially supported. As predicted, no interactions were found among the situational variables. But the hypothesized additive effect of the variables represented by comparisons of active and passive publics was not found. Hypothesis #3 was supported. Recognition memory overall was significantly higher than cued recall memory.

Hypothesis #4 was partially supported. No difference in the memory performance of the active publics as a function of memory task (cued recall vs. recognition) was found. However, involvement alone did have the hypothesized effect, with recognition memory scores being significantly higher than cued recall scores.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

The most striking finding is the limited effect of any one of the situational variables as well as the lack of effect of the variables in combination. Only one finding was significant at $p < .05$. This significant finding was consistent with Grunig's finding in 1989; constraint recognition was found to work in a way counter to the theory. Subjects expressing high levels of constraint exhibited higher cued recall scores than did subjects expressing low constraint.

Perhaps constraint is measuring a sense of the difficulty of

the issue and reflects a serious-minded attitude and a likelihood of trying harder than low constraint subjects. Much as fretful students before an exam may often be the ones earning A's on the exam, so may constraint be confounded with other attributes. Constraint may be bound up with variables such as responsibleness and realism. Perhaps an index of several items should be used to identify conditions of high and low constraint recognition.

It is interesting that constraint recognition is counter-theoretical in its effect on memory but not in its effect on attitudinal and behavioral variables tested in Grunig's program of work. It could be that constraint recognition motivates cognitive effort while dampening inclination to seek information or hold certain attitudes or cognitions. Perhaps one views unsought information as a means of raising one's self-efficacy and this serves as some motivation, in spite of a self-reported disinclination to seek information in the first place.

With further research, we may find that the situational variables are aligned differently as a function of the dependent measure. For example, high constraint recognition may predict good memory performance while low constraint best predicts behavior or organization of cognitions. None of the findings precludes continued use of all three variables, provided one takes into account the dependent measures in use.

In fact, the failure to find any interaction effects lends credence to including all three variables in the theory. The variables, though not profound in their effects are at least not

working at odds with each other. For example, if it had been found that involvement and problem recognition worked in opposite ways for different levels of constraint recognition, then the theory would require an inelegant explanation of the role of constraint recognition in the theory.

Absence of interaction effects for the three variables is encouraging evidence in favor of the theory. But the overall lack of discriminating power of the variables at $p < .05$ is a problem. Some statisticians argue against the conventional wisdom that hypotheses should be considered only on a go/no-go basis at .05, positing instead that the relative likelihood of their occurring by chance must be considered in the context of the study.[18] However, even easing the alpha level to .10, a figure commonly acceptable in actual campaign practice, does not result in much evidence in support of the predictive value of the situational theory with regard to memory performance.

Using .10 as the alpha level, two additional findings are relatively likely to have occurred systematically as a function of the independent variables. But one supports the theory and the other is counter-theoretical. Constraint recognition was found to have a similar counter-theoretical effect on recognition memory as it had on cued recall. This makes the case even stronger for sorting out variables such as responsibleness or

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[18] W. W. Rozeboom, "The Fallacy of the Null-Hypothesis Significance Test," Psychological Bulletin, 57 (1960), pp. 416-428; Snodgrass et al, Op cit.

realism that might be confounded with constraint. Also, it may be that responsibleness is a contingent condition explaining the effect of constraint recognition on memory performance.

Regardless of what may be discovered about the mechanism at work for constraint recognition and memory performance, this second instance of constraint recognition having the opposite effect for memory as for attitude and behavior strengthens the case for refining Grunig's situational theory by taking into account the dependent measure. The next generation of the theory may need to specify counter-intuitive outcomes for active and passive publics, depending upon whether the campaigner seeks to accomplish cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioral objectives.

Whether one accepts the relativist position concerning probability levels or holds with compromise language such as "nonsignificant findings were found in the hypothesized direction" or whether one adheres to a conventional probability level of .05, findings in support of the theory are limited. The results challenge the efficacy of the situational theory with regard to memory performance of publics defined by the theory.

In looking at the discouraging results for memory performance of active and passive publics, one must ask why variables found to work quite well in describing attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive responses of various publics prove so weak with respect to memory performance.

The first but least likely answer is that past research by Grunig and his colleagues is flawed, that the many self-report

measures used have introduced an artifact that doesn't occur when measuring actual behavior such as memory performance. Conducting experiments to test attitude, behavior and cognitive response along with memory would be useful in evaluating artifactual concerns.

A likely alternative to the position that the program of research on the situational theory is spurious is to undertake further study to identify antecedent conditions and intervening and contingent variables that particularly affect memory performance but not other dependent measures. It could be that these findings will lead to a theory combining the hierarchy of effects and the situational theory. Perhaps knowledge gain is not an essential or at least not an early stage in the hierarchy of effects experienced by members of an active public. In other words, it may be that active publics really don't learn significantly more about a topic, yet adopt predicted attitudes and behaviors one would expect of such a public in spite of undistinguished knowledge for a topic.

Another important theoretical consideration is the possibility that miscomprehension may be a confounding factor. Members of active publics may suffer from proactive interference effects and diffusion of activation strength in memory search. Such effects would be predicted in cognitive psychological literature as occurring while subjects are relatively unfamiliar with a topic. As knowledge becomes more organized, deleterious effects of involvement drop away.

The difference in overall memory performance on recall and recognition memory tasks supports the proactive interference and diffusion theories. Involvement had a significant enhancing effect ($p < .10$) on recognition but not on cued recall. Enhancement occurs for one memory task but not another even though involvement would provide motivation for doing both tasks well. As hypothesized, involvement probably hampers the search and retrieval process of cued recall while not affecting the identification process essential to recognition.

Practical Implications

First, one should not assume that a theory proven over time to be efficacious in defining publics and predicting attitudinal, behavioral and certain cognitive responses does equally well with memory performance for those publics. If a practitioner is mainly seeking to define publics in terms of likelihood of remembering messages, the current experiment offers little support for using the situational theory to segment the audience.

Likewise, when considering memory performance, the practitioner must distinguish types of memory performance. Recognition may be more useful in marketing while recall may be more important in public relations. Rothschild, extending Krugman's ideas about low involvement processing, made a convincing case for the distinction between recognition-based objectives typical in "business campaigns" and recall-based

objectives typical in nonbusiness campaigns.[19] Business campaigns can benefit from recognition at the point of purchase. The business campaign need only evoke recognition as the subject moves down the shopping aisle.

Typical public relations campaigns, on the other hand, often deal more with issues and less with point of purchase decisions. For this reason, public relations campaigns would be better advised to use a theory that makes accurate predictions about cued recall performance of publics. Unfortunately, elements of the situational theory were found to be better predictors of recognition memory than of cued recall memory, again arguing against use of the situational theory to define publics for informational campaigns.

Methodological Implications

Different topics might have a different effect. This can be deduced from the cell sizes for distribution of subjects into various conditions of the experiment. Most subjects didn't view the investment decisions as a problem and most felt they could influence investment decisions at their university if they so desired. Perhaps topics leading to a more even and strongly polarized split would bring about greater between-groups variance in memory scores.

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[19] M. L. Rothschild, "Marketing communications in nonbusiness situations or why it's so hard to sell brotherhood like soap," Journal of marketing, 43 (1979), pp. 11-20.

Subject factors were controlled for involvement by virtue of the within-subjects design. But for problem recognition and constraint recognition, the between-subjects, quasi-experimental design is open to questions of validity. For example, do subjects capable of recognizing that they can have little influence on university investments do so by virtue of greater responsibleness or intelligence?

Ecological validity is not a strength of the experimental method; the experience of subjects in this experiment was not typical of their everyday experience with investor relations information. Subjects knew they would be tested, but in practice this is not the case. Nevertheless, the relationship of variables to each other, the differential effect of the variables and an ideal set of circumstances for finding an effect on memory were made possible using the experimental method. This experiment, with its pointed instructions that a memory task was required should have offered a best case for predictive power of the variables, yet little predictive power was found.

Several procedural considerations merit note. To rule out the effect of neutral responses for constraint and problem recognition, a second analysis was done with casewise exclusion of neutral responses. Findings were consistent with those found using the larger sample.

Perhaps the short delays between the three phases of the experiment (reading essays, reading the memory set and testing for cued recall) enabled activation levels throughout the related

memory networks to remain relatively high.[20] This would make search effective and retrieval sharp, ameliorating the predicted effects of situational variables on cued recall as well as reducing differences between groups. Subsequent experiments will address this by adding delayed memory measures to the procedure.

In addition, instructions did not include warnings or penalties for guessing answers. It is possible that subjects tended not to admit to recall failure, but opted for guessing instead. There is no reason to believe guessing would necessarily have a systematic effect counter to the effects of the situational variables, but it could contribute to higher error term and hence to a reduced likelihood of finding significant differences.

The cued recall task may have been too difficult for between-groups variance to arise. However, based on a pretest of the instrument, the pairs of sentences were split and presented singly to avoid floor effects that occurred in the pretest. Perhaps the increased difficulty of associating unpaired sentences resulted in a shift from floor effects to ceiling effects.

Future research should take into account these methodological considerations. In addition, future memory experiments should use other topics and other manipulations of

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[20] J. W. Alba, S. G. Alexander, L. Hasher & K. Caniglia, "The role of context in the encoding of information," Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning & Memory, 7 (1981), pp. 283-292.

the independent variables. Experiments combining measures of memory, attitude and behavior could better address the proposition made here that the situational variables work in opposite ways for different dependent variables.

Until further work is done, one certainly must assume that the situational theory is unreliable in defining important publics for campaign efforts such as occur in investor relations and related public informational specialties. Apparently, predicting the likelihood that members of a group will actively seek information does not necessarily result in significantly better memory for that information. With further research, an integrated theory of public relations taking into account dependent measures as well as a tested set of independent measures extending from the situational variables will increase the sophistication of audience segmentation in persuasive campaigns.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Cued Recall.[1]

CUED RECALL ACCURACY

low involvement condition

	lo prob.	hi prob.	marginal	grand mean	N
lo const.	.66	.54	.60		
	(.18)	(.30)	(.24)	.65	140
hi const.	.68	.71	.695		
	(.23)	(.22)	(.225)		
marginal	.67	.625			
	(.205)	(.26)			

high involvement condition

	lo prob.	hi prob.	marginal	grand mean	N
lo const.	.68	.63	.655		
	(.21)	(.24)	(.225)	.69	140
hi const.	.72	.72	.72		
	(.18)	(.21)	(.195)		
marginal	.70	.675			
	(.195)	(.225)			

Overall mean for cued recall is .67.

Key:
lo prob. = low problem recognition
hi prob. = high problem recognition
lo const. = low constraint recognition
hi const. = high constraint recognition

[1]. Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 2. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Recognition[1].

RECOGNITION ACCURACY

low involvement condition

	lo prob.	hi prob.	marginal	grand mean	N
lo const.	.73 (.17)	.66 (.21)	.695 (.19)	.72	140
hi const.	.73 (.17)	.74 (.10)	.735 (.135)		
marginal	.73 (.17)	.70 (.155)			

high involvement condition

	lo prob.	hi prob.	marginal	grand mean	N
lo const.	.75 (.17)	.72 (.23)	.735 (.20)	.76	140
hi const.	.79 (.18)	.79 (.17)	.79 (.175)		
marginal	.77 (.175)	.755 (.20)			

Overall mean for recognition is .74.

Key:
lo prob. = low problem recognition
hi prob. = high problem recognition
lo const. = low constraint recognition
hi const. = high constraint recognition

[1]. Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 3. Cell Sizes as a Function of the Situational Variables.

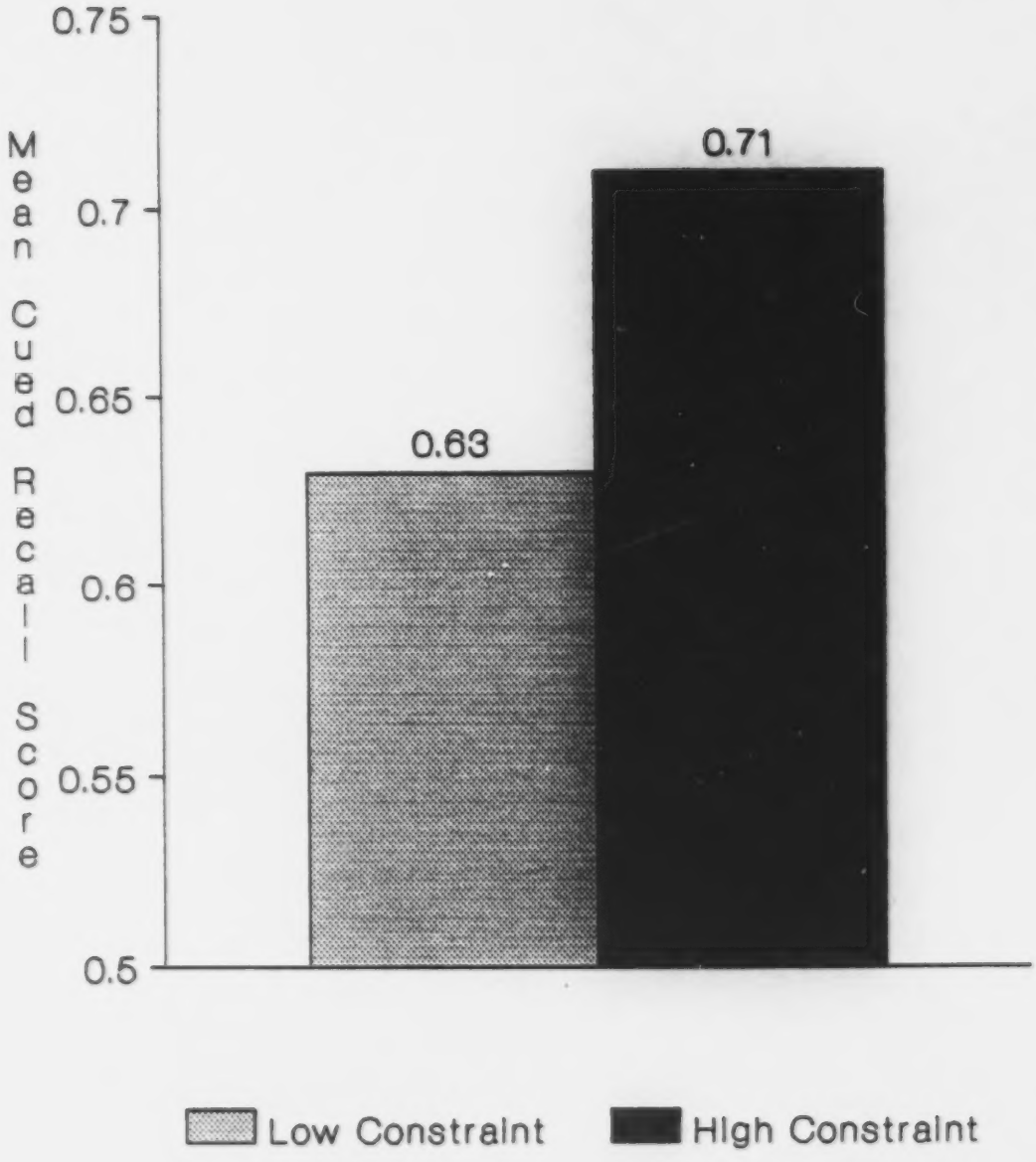
	lo prob.	hi prob.	marginal
lo const.	73	21	94
hi const.	37	9	46
marginal	110	30	140

low involvement condition	140
high involvement condition	140

Key:

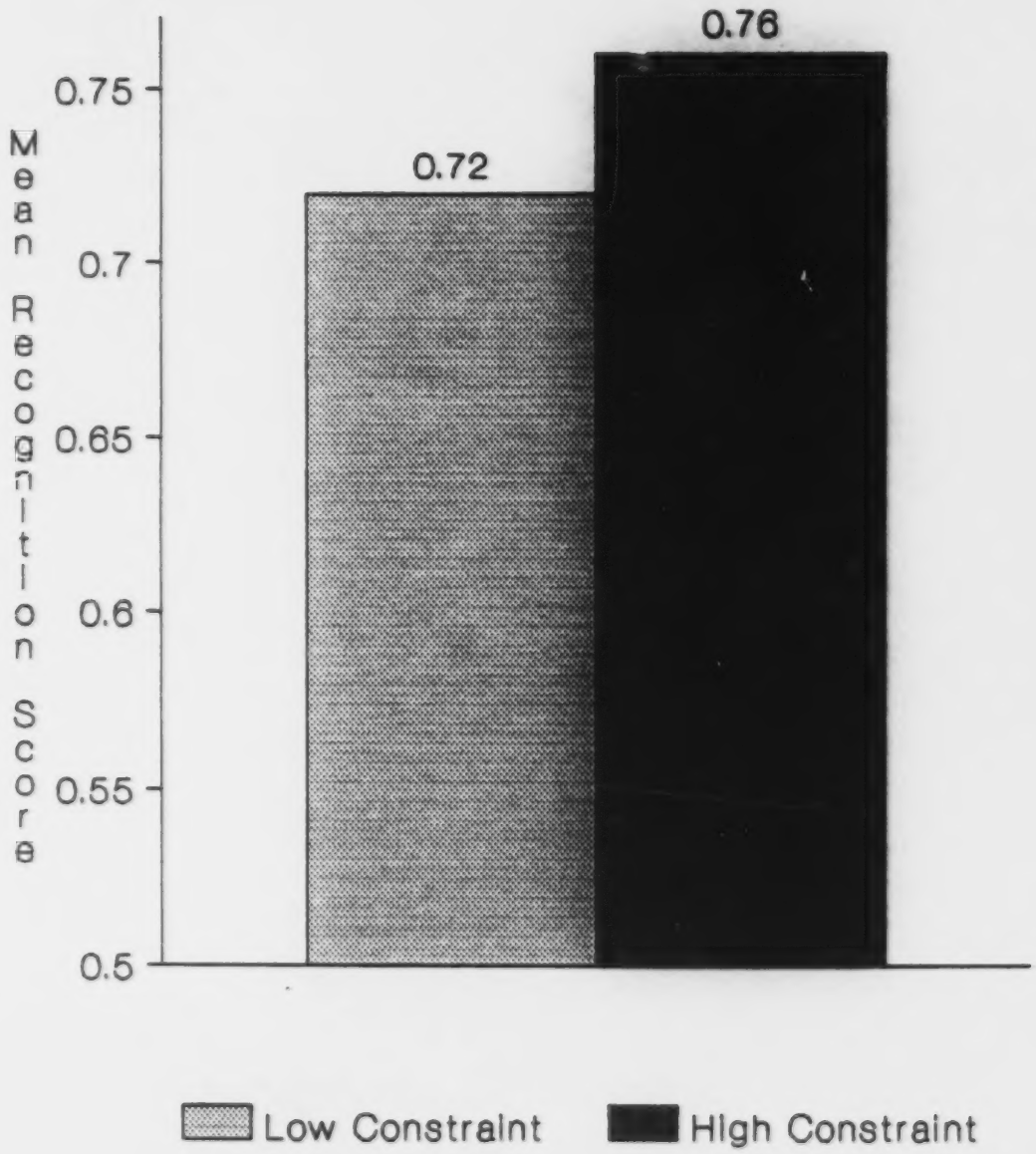
lo prob. = low problem recognition
hi prob. = high problem recognition
lo const. = low constraint recognition
hi const. = high constraint recognition

Figure 1. Mean cued recall score as a function of constraint.



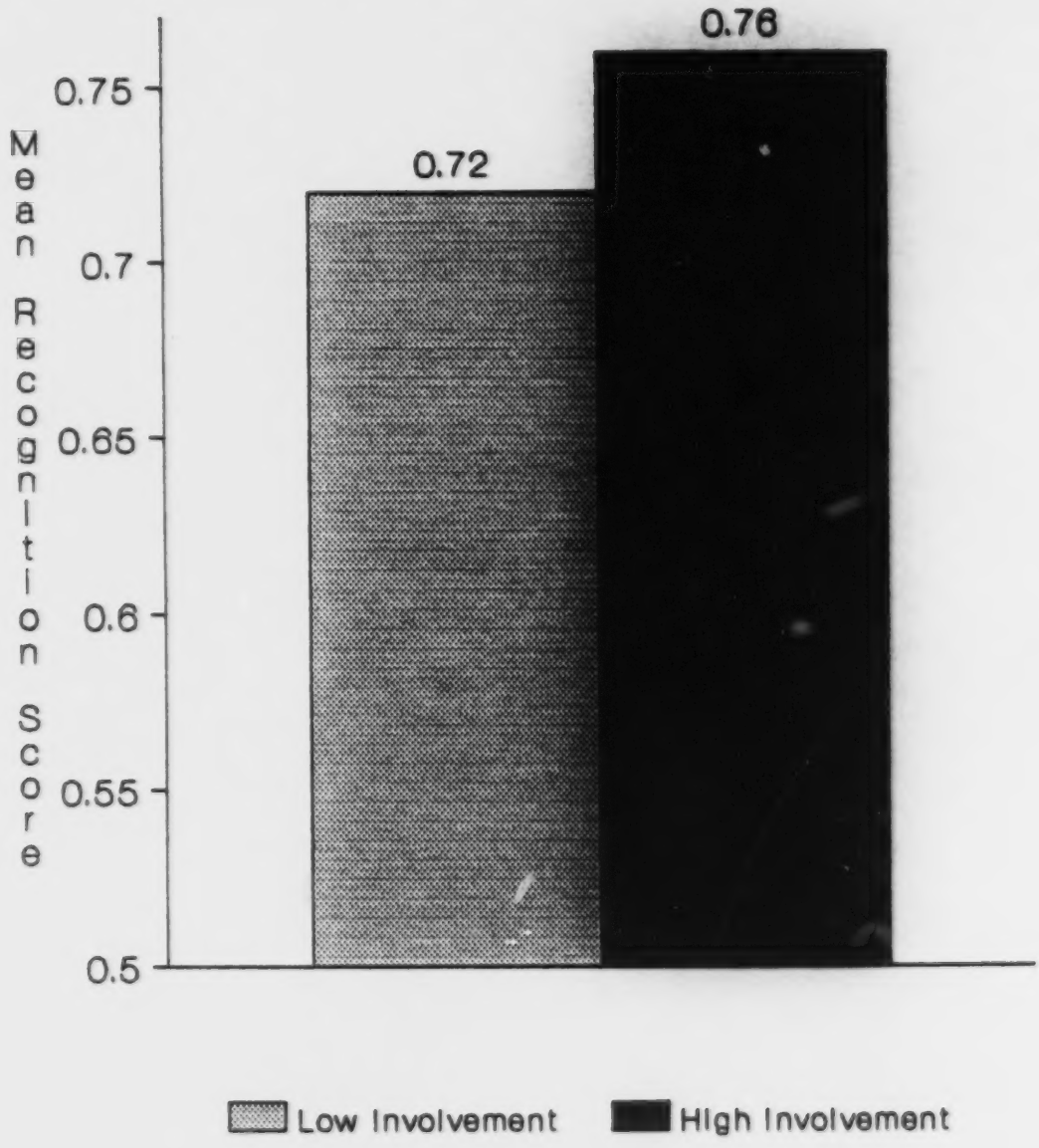
Main effect
Constraint: $F(1,136) = 4.66$, $p = .033$

Figure 2. Mean recognition score as a function of constraint.



Main effect
Constraint: $F(1,136) = 2.77$, $p = .098$

Figure 3. Mean recognition score as a function of involvement.



Main effect
Involvement: F (1,136) = 2.83, p = .095

Models of Public Relations: A Review and Reconceptualization

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Models of Public Relations: A Review and Reconceptualization

Abstract

Since J. Grunig and Hunt introduced the concept of four models of public relations in their 1984 textbook, *Managing Public Relations*, the models have become part of the academic language of public relations and the subject of much research. Research has been designed to establish the presence of the models in the actual practice of public relations, clarify the models theoretically, and identify the conditions that explain why organizations practice the models they do.

This paper traces the history of the concept and reviews research on the reliability, validity, and accuracy of the models; the kinds of organizations that practice each model, and variables that explain why organizations practice different models. The paper then reviews both empirical and theoretical critiques of the models and uses those critiques to reconceptualize the models as four points on two continua, one of craft public relations and one of professional public relations. The paper then presents evidence that the two-way symmetrical model characterizes "excellent" public relations. It concludes with a review of literature on conflict, collaboration, and negotiation that help to build the two-way symmetrical model as a normative theory of excellent public relations.

Models of Public Relations: A Review and Reconceptualization

In 1975, J. Grunig had just completed his first study of the behavior of public relations practitioners and submitted it for publication in *Journalism Monographs*. One of the anonymous referees of the manuscript criticized the basic idea behind the research. The reviewer argued that the activities of public relations practitioners are so diverse that any attempt to classify those activities and to explain why they occur is a futile exercise.

Fortunately, the editor accepted J. Grunig's contention that he had successfully developed categories to describe public relations behavior, and the results of the study were published (J. Grunig, 1976). That study was the first in a program of research that has brought researchers close to an understanding of the different ways in which public relations practitioners and public relations departments of organizations perform communication functions and close to an explanation of why these behaviors differ.

If the anonymous reviewer were correct in saying that public relations behaviors cannot be classified and the reasons why these behaviors occur cannot be explained, then the search for excellence in public relations that we are pursuing in a major project sponsored by the IABC Research Foundation would be fruitless. To achieve our research purpose, we must be able to provide a "model" of excellent public relations and must be able to distinguish that model from other typical ways in which public relations is practiced. We use the term "model" here in the way that it is used in the sciences--as a simplified representation of reality. Although all models are "false" in the sense that no representation can capture reality perfectly, we would have no understanding of reality at all if we had no model with which to work.

We use the term "model" to describe a set of values and a pattern of behavior that characterize the approach taken by a public relations department or individual practitioner to all programs or, in some cases, to specific programs or campaigns. Thus, "model" describes a

broader pattern of behavior than does the concept of roles that has been a similar focus of public relations research (e.g., Dozier, in prep).

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) introduced four models of public relations to capture the enormous variation in public relations practice and to reduce that variation to these four simplified representations. Since that time, the four models have become a standard part of academic language about public relations and the subject of much research. In this paper, we review the history of the concept of models and of the conditions that explain why organizations practice them. We then use this research to reconceptualize the models and a theory of why organizations practice the models. We also explain why we believe one of these models will characterize the behavior of excellent public relations departments--the subject of the IABC-sponsored study.

A HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS

Historians of public relations and authors of textbooks have used crude terms to describe different kinds of public relations. Historian Eric Goldman (1948), for example, contrasted two eras in the history of public relations, the era of "the public be fooled"--his name for press agentry--and the era of the "public be informed"--his name for public information. Similarly, the simple distinction between one-way and two-way communication can be traced to many early textbooks, such as Cutlip and Center's (1952) first edition.

In his first study of public relations behavior, J. Grunig (1976) took the idea of one-way and two-way models of communication but elaborated the idea to include the purpose of the communication as well as the direction. He used Thayer's (1968) concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication to describe two approaches to public relations. The purpose of synchronic communication, as Thayer explained it, is to "synchronize" the behavior of a public with that of the organization so that the organization can continue to behave in the way it wants without interference. The purpose of diachronic communication is to negotiate a state of affairs that benefits both the organization and the public.

In this 1976 study, J. Grunig measured the extent to which 216 organizations in the Baltimore-Washington area practiced 16 public relations activities, such as the writing of press releases, research to plan a program, research to evaluate a program, or counseling of management. He used factor analysis to reduce these 16 activities to two dimensions that approximated the synchronic and diachronic models of public relations. Later Schneider [aka L. Grunig] (1985a) correlated these 16 activities with four types of organizations described by Hage and Hull (1981).

In these two studies, we had limited success in explaining these two types of public relations behavior. A major reason for this lack of success, we believed, was that the two models were too gross and oversimplified to capture the reality of public relations practice. As a result, it was difficult to predict who would practice the models and in what situations they would be practiced. Later, J. Grunig (1984) also concluded that the terms "synchronic" and "diachronic," which mean literally "at one time" and "at two times," did not describe accurately the difference in purpose he had in mind for the two kinds of public relations. He replaced these terms with the terms "asymmetrical" and "symmetrical" to describe the purpose of public relations as striving for balanced rather than unbalanced communication and effects.

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) first identified the four models in the history of public relations. Although J. Grunig and Hunt acknowledged that there had been "public-relations-like" activities throughout history, they claimed that the press agents of the mid-Nineteenth Century were the first full-time specialists to practice public relations. These press agents practiced the *press agentry/publicity* model of public relations for such heroes as Andrew Jackson, Daniel Boone, Buffalo Bill Cody, and Calamity Jane. The most prominent of these practitioners was P.T. Barnum, who skillfully promoted his circus performers using the axiom, "There is a sucker born every minute."

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, according to J. Grunig and Hunt (1984), a second model of public relations, the *public information model*, developed as a reaction to attacks on large corporations and government agencies by muckraking journalists. Leaders of these organizations realized they needed more than the propaganda of press agents to counter the attacks on them in the media. Instead, they hired their own journalists as public relations practitioners to write press "handouts" explaining their actions. Although practitioners of the public information model generally chose to write only good things about their organizations, the information they did report generally was truthful and accurate.

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified Ivy Lee as the primary historical figure whose work characterized the public information model. Lee began his career as a newspaper reporter who did his best work writing about banking and business. When he moved to the employ of the businesses he reported, he was able to use his talent for "explaining complicated and misunderstood facts to a popular audience" (Hiebert, 1966, p. 39) to help business explain and defend itself.

Both the press agentry and the public information models represent one-way approaches to public relations--the dissemination of information from organizations to publics, usually through the media. Beginning with the Creel Committee during World War I, however, some public relations practitioners began to base their work on the behavioral and social sciences. Foremost among these practitioners was Edward L. Bernays. As a nephew of Sigmund Freud, he took an interest in psychology and based his practice on it.

Behavioral and social sciences, of course, would not be sciences if they were not based on research. Thus, the introduction of a scientific approach made the practice of public relations two-way: Practitioners both sought information from and gave information to publics. Sciences also are based on theories; and the theories introduced by Bernays were those of propaganda,

persuasion, and the "engineering of consent." J. Grunig and Hunt (1984), therefore, described the first two-way model of public relations as the *two-way asymmetrical model.*

According to Olasky (1987, 1989) historical research shows that Bernays believed that humans are manipulable, as evidenced by the success of Nazi propagandists at the time of World War II. Bernays reasoned, however, that if humans could be manipulated for evil purposes, they also could be manipulated for good. The secret of successful manipulation was in understanding the motivations of people and in using research to identify the messages most likely to produce the attitudes and behaviors desired by an organization. The asymmetrical position taken by Bernays may sound reasonable; but, as J. Grunig (1989) pointed out, organizations often believe that publics benefit from "a lot of strange things":

> ...pollution, toxic waste, drinking, smoking, guns, overthrow of governments, dangerous products, lowered salary and benefits, discrimination against women and minorities, job layoffs, dangerous manufacturing plants, risky transportation of products, higher prices, monopoly power, poor product quality, political favoritism, insider trading, use of poisonous chemicals, exposure to carcinogens, nuclear weapons, and even warfare. (p. 32)

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified many of the assumptions of the fourth model of public relations, the *two-way symmetrical model,* in the writings of practitioners such as Lee, Bernays, and John Hill. These assumptions (p. 42) included "telling the truth," "interpreting the client and public to one another," and "management understanding the viewpoints of employees and neighbors as well as employees and neighbors understanding the viewpoints of management." They added, however, that few of these practitioners put such assumptions into practice and that it was public relations scholars and educators who took the practitioners at their word and made the model the basis of their teaching and research.

The two-way symmetrical model makes use of research and other forms of two-way communication. Unlike the two-way asymmetrical model, however, it uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or

persuade,publics. In the symmetrical model, understanding is the principal objective of public relations rather than persuasion.

Although J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified these four models as stages in the history of public relations, they said they believed that all of the models are practiced today. Thus J. Grunig (1984) developed measures of the models and began a program of research to determine if the theoretical models do indeed describe the practice of public relations and to identify conditions that explain why organizations practice the models they do. He began this research by identifying two variables underlying the four models: direction and purpose. Direction describes the extent to which the model is one-way or two-way. One-way communication disseminates information; it is a monologue. Two-way communication exchanges information; it is a dialogue. Purpose describes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communication is imbalanced; it leaves the organization as is and tries to change the public. Symmetrical communication is balanced; it adjusts the *relationship* between the organization and public.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989), therefore, conceptualized the press agentry model as a one-way asymmetrical model, the public information model as a one-way symmetrical model, and the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models as their names indicate. Later, J. Grunig (1989) changed his mind about this two-by-two typology and also described the public information model as an asymmetrical model. Because practitioners of the public information model selectively disseminate information about their organization--all of which is "true" or "accurate"--J. Grunig reasoned that they do not truly engage in a dialogue.

Thus, he characterized (p. 30) the press agentry and two-way asymmetrical models as "craft" and "scientific" versions of asymmetrical public relations and the public information model as "*de facto* asymmetrical public relations." Only the two-way symmetrical model, he argued,

represented a break from the predominant worldview that public relations is a way of manipulating publics for the benefit of the organization.

Recently, J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) assertion that the history of public relations can be interpreted as four developmental stages described by the models has come under attack. Olasky (1987) argued that public relations did not originate with press agentry. Instead, he argued, organizations practiced what he calls "private relations" before they practiced public relations. With private relations, organizations either did not feel obligated to communicate with publics or organizational executives communicated directly with publics without the intervention of manipulative public relations practitioners. Although Olasky (1987) did not use the term "symmetrical," his discussion suggests that "private relations" were symmetrical before press agents made "public relations" asymmetrical.

In addition, feminist scholars recently have criticized histories of public relations for ignoring the contributions of women practitioners. L. Grunig (1989), in addition, suggested that preliminary historical evidence suggests that women were practicing public relations early in the history of the United States and that they appear to have practiced the symmetrical model.

Whatever their historical origins, however, the four models of public relations do provide us with a way of describing and explaining how and why contemporary public relations is practiced as it is. The primary proposition of this paper, therefore, is that excellent public relations departments practice the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. We will provide support for that proposition from the research literature. First, however, we turn to research that has established the reliability and validity of the models and has identified the conditions that explain why organizations practice them.

DO THE MODELS EXIST IN THE REAL WORLD?

Many practitioners of public relations, in particular those with anti-intellectual tendencies, often react to theories such as the four models with the well-worn cliche' that "it may be true in

theory but it doesn't work in practice." Although that statement usually reveals that the person who made it does not understand the nature of a theory, it does focus attention on two questions that are important to an evaluation of the concept of public relations models: whether the models provide a *normative* or a *positive* theory of public relations and, if they provide a positive theory, whether the models describe accurately what practitioners actually do.

A normative theory defines how things *should be* or how some activity should be carried out. According to Massy and Weitz (1977, p. 122), positive theories are used to understand problems whereas normative theories are used to solve problems. In developing a normative theory, theorists have no obligation to show that an activity actually is conducted in the way the theory describes. They must show only that if an activity were to be conducted as the theory prescribes, it would be effective. Normative theories are common in fields such as management science, operations research, the economics of decision making, and--to a lesser extent--marketing and organizational communication. Ehling (1984, 1985), for example, constructed such a normative theories of public relations.

The "good in theory but not in practice" cliche' is relevant to a normative theory. When applied to a normative theory, the cliche' would mean that although the theory is logical it is not practical--realistically, it could not be implemented in an actual situation. Theorists construct a normative theory to provide a model that, if followed, would improve the practice of the activity that it models. If that normative theory, in fact, cannot be implemented then it would not be a good theory.

Each of the four models of public relations could serve as a normative theory of public relations. They could tell a practitioner how to be a press agent or public information specialist, for example. We believe, however, that the two-way symmetrical model should be the normative model for public relations--that it describes how excellent public relations should be practiced.

In addition, we believe that the four models also describe how public relations actually is practiced--that they are a *positive* (descriptive) theory of public relations. Positive theories describe phenomena, events, or activities as they actually occur. Most theories in the physical sciences are positive. They describe the rotation of the earth, the nature of the atom, and the origin of the universe. They do not tell the earth how to rotate, how the atom should be structured, or how a new universe could be initiated.

Positive theories can be evaluated in part by whether they correspond to reality. If public relations is not practiced as described by the models, the models would not be a good positive theory. In that case, the "good in theory but not in practice" criticism would not apply. If the "theory" is not good in describing practice, it could not be "good in theory." The evidence from research supports the conclusion that the four models provide a good positive theory: Public relations practitioners do indeed practice all of them. Later we will show, however, that practitioners generally do not practice the model that would be best for their organizations. Thus, we have concluded that the relationship of the models to the environment of the organization functions more as a normative than a positive theory. We will introduce positive theories, however, that explain why organizations do not practice the theory that normatively would be best for them.

In the social and behavioral sciences, normative and positive theories can overlap in ways that they could not in the physical sciences. They can overlap because humans invent normative theories and apply them in practice. Once practiced, they become positive theories because they then describe practice in the real world. For example, each of the four models of public relations was developed normatively by a theorist such as Ivy Lee, Edward L. Bernays or Scott Cutlip, who constructed them in the abstract and then implemented them in the real world or taught others how to implement them. Indeed, research should be able to show that a good normative theory functions in practice in the way the normative theory says it should. As Massy and Weitz

(1977) put it, useful normative theory should provide solutions "under typical conditions encountered in actual practice" (p. 123).

We believe, therefore, that--normatively--the two-way symmetrical model defines the most excellent way of practicing public relations and that--positively--research will show that model does the most to make organizations effective. To test that model positively against the other models we must be able to show that the concept of the models can be *measured* and that it has *reliability*, *validity*, and *accuracy*--that the models can be identified and measured accurately in the real world.

Measurement

If the concept of the four models is to be part of a positive theory of public relations, a researcher must be able to measure the extent to which organizations or individual practitioners practice each model. These measures can be either quantitative or qualitative. With quantitative measures, researchers construct a series of items for a questionnaire to which a practitioner or some other observer of an organization would be asked to provide a numerical score to indicate how well each item describes public relations in that organization. With qualitative measures, researchers would, for example, examine publications of an organization, interview a practitioner or other observer, or personally observe public relations activities or descriptions of them. They then could make reasoned judgments about whether one or more of the models describe the public relations activities of an organization.

To date, most researchers have measured the four models quantitatively, although in at least five studies (Hardwick, 1980; Nanni, 1980; Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985b; Maymi, 1987; Buffington, 1988) they have used quantitative measures to identify the model practiced and then have supplemented those data with qualitative observations to describe in more detail how organizations practice the models.

J. Grunig (1976) first developed quantitative measures for the concepts of synchronic and diachronic public relations, the concepts that led to the development of the four models. He measured these two concepts with a question asking how often organizations practiced 16 public relations activities. He then used factor analysis to group these procedures into indices of diachronic and synchronic practices.

Since some of these practices, such as the use of press releases or research to plan a project, could be used in all of the models, researchers subsequently moved toward somewhat more subjective measures of the models. Hardwick (1980) and Nanni (1980), for example, asked practitioners both whether they used research and whether their objective was to change attitudes and behavior or to facilitate communication and understanding.

J. Grunig (1984) began the work that has resulted in our current measure of the models by writing eight questionnaire items for each model based on six dimensions described in J. Grunig and Hunt (1984). These dimensions were the purpose of public relations; control vs. adaptation as a goal; the role of public relations as advocacy, dissemination, or mediation; one-way vs. two-way communication; media relations as an application of the models; and the use of research. Public relations practitioners responded to the items by indicating on a five-point scale how well each item described the way their organization practiced public relations. These eight items then were averaged to provide an index of each of the models.

Reliability

For these quantitative measures to be good ones, they first must be reliable. That is, they should yield the same results each time they are used--"yield the same results on repeated trials," in the words of Carmines and Zeller (1979, p. 11). To measure reliability, J. Grunig and several other researchers calculated Cronbach's Alpha, one of the standard measures of reliability. Cronbach's Alpha can be interpreted as a correlation of the index with another index that could be constructed to measure the same activities. There is no standard for how high Cronbach's Alpha

should be. Carmines and Zeller (1979, p. 51) said they believe it should be .80 or higher for "widely used scales." Alphas of .50 to .65 frequently are reported in communication research, however, and most researchers consider indices with such Alphas to be adequate.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) reported Cronbach's Alpha for seven studies conducted at the University of Maryland using the models (J. Grunig, 1984; E. Pollack, 1984; McMillan, 1984, 1987; Fabiszak, 1985; R. Pollack, 1986; Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985b; Lauzen, 1986). In some of these studies, some items were dropped to increase reliability; and several items were rewritten as the research progressed to make them more reliable. After these adjustments, the average Cronbach's Alpha in the seven studies was .62 for the press agentry index, .53 for public information, .57 for two-way asymmetrical, and .59 for two-way symmetrical. (For the two-way asymmetrical index, one study reported an abnormally low alpha, which was not included in this average.)

Ossareh (1987) simplified the instrument by selecting the three items from each index that were most reliable and obtained comparable alphas of .48, .57, .76, and .51 for the press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical models, respectively. In developing the IABC excellence project we took the three items selected by Ossareh and added one more item that also had been reliable in the previous studies. Wetherell (1989) used those four items and an improved scaling technique also used in the excellence project--an open-end "fractionation" scale--and found reliabilities of .78, .60, .81, and .76 for the models in the same order.

In short, we have improved the reliability scores for the four models to the point where they are at or near the standard of .80 with the exception of the public information model. Reliability for that model consistently has been lower than for the other models because many of the items are related to the dissemination of information, which to some extent is practiced in all of the models.

Validity

In addition to being reliable, a theoretical concept must be valid if it is to be part of a good positive theory--that is, researchers must be able to measure what the theory says they should measure. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) consolidated data from four studies (E. Pollack, 1984; McMillan, 1984, 1987; Fabiszak, 1985; R. Pollack, 1986) that reported two tests of the *concurrent validity* of the four models. Concurrent validity indicates the extent to which measures of a concept correlate with other, criterion, variables with which they logically should correlate (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Stamm, 1981; Wimmer & Dominick, 1983).

First, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) examined correlations of the models with the 16 public relations practices that J. Grunig (1975) had used to measure diachronic and synchronic public relations and additional practices added to the list in one or more of these four studies. In general, the models did not correlate strongly with any of the journalistic techniques of public relations, such as writing press releases, preparing publications, or holding press conferences. These techniques, the authors concluded, are tools used in all of the models. Some correlations with techniques fit the logic of the models, however, and supported their validity:

> ...the public information model correlated positively with preparing house organs, magazines, publications, and newsletters and negatively with making informal contact with the public. Tours, events, and open houses correlated positively with the two-way symmetrical model in the federal government and negatively with the public information and press agentry models. Marketing in hospitals correlated positively with the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models and negatively with the public information model. Fundraising correlated with two-way asymmetrical public relations in hospitals. In associations, press agentry correlated positively with promoting trade shows and exhibits, building membership, and furnishing advertising materials to members. (p. 37)

Correlations with research activities, however, provided the strongest evidence of the validity of the models. In general, conducting formative and evaluative research correlated positively with the two-way models and negatively with press agentry and public information. The two-way models also correlated positively with the extent to which practitioners reported that they

counsel management, and the correlation was highest for the two-way symmetrical model. In addition, contacting government officials and thought leaders correlated positively with the two-way symmetrical model. All of these relationships reflect the logic of the models.

Martinson and Ryan (1989) and Ossareh (1987) reported similar evidence of concurrent validity. Martinson and Ryan (1989) found that practitioners with high scores on the two-way models also believed in the value of research in public relations--including theoretical research--while those scoring highly on the one-way models did not. Ossareh (1987) found that practitioners of the two-way models--especially the two-way symmetrical model--more often used computers in their work than did practitioners of the one-way models.

As a second test of the concurrent validity of the models, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) reported the results of four studies that correlated the indices with the four public relations roles developed by Broom and Dozier (e.g., Dozier, in prep). Logically, the two-way models cannot be implemented without a communication manager to plan public relations programs. Communication technicians alone can practice the press agentry and public information models, however. As expected, results showed that when the top person in a public relations department was a communication manager, the organization was more likely to practice the two-way asymmetrical or symmetrical model. When the top person was a technician, the organization was more likely to practice press agentry or public information.[1]

Accuracy

We do have evidence, therefore, that the four models of public relations fit the two standard criteria for a positive theory. We also have evidence related to a third standard, which we call *theoretical accuracy*--the extent to which the four models accurately represent the most common ways in which public relations is practiced in the real world. The theoretical models

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[1]Judd (1987) also reported that managers more often practiced the two-way models and technicians the one-way models.

would not be accurate if there actually are more models of public relations being practiced or if these four could be consolidated into fewer models.

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed the models by analyzing the history of public relations. Neither is an historian, however, and research by historians might reveal other models--e.g., Olasky's (1987) concept of "private relations" could constitute another model. In addition, the models are based on the history and practice of public relations in the United States. Research in other cultures (e.g., Sriramesh & J. Grunig, 1988) also may reveal other models.

Several researchers have conducted factor analyses of the items J. Grunig developed to measure the four items. Factor analysis clusters items empirically--i.e., it groups the items to which people tend to give the same responses. These empirical clusters can be compared with the theoretical clusters of items to see if reality fits the theory. J. Grunig (1984) and Lauzen (1986) found that factor analysis fragmented the items into dimensions of the models, such as research activities, media relations, or purpose of communication. Thus, they concluded that factor analysis did not produce a better set of models than did J. Grunig's (1984) original theoretical models.

Dozier (1989) and Reagan, Anderson, Sumner and Hill (1989) found two-factor solutions for the items. A one-way factor combined the press agentry and public information models, and a two-way factor combined the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models. Likewise, Turk (1986) had difficulty separating the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models for state government agencies. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989, p. 40) also reported consistent positive correlations in six studies between the press agentry and public information and the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models.

The two-factor solutions, however, may have been an artifact of the type of factor analysis conducted--exploratory rather than confirmatory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis allows the computer to define the factors with no guidance from a theory. Confirmatory factor analysis attempts to confirm the predictions of the theory (Fink & Monge, 1985). To date, all factor

analyses of the four models have been exploratory. Although some of the researchers have suggested that there may be only two models of public relations, we believe that confirmatory factor analysis would support the presence of four models. We believe, however, that confirmatory factors representing the press agentry and public information models and those representing the two two-way models would be correlated with each other.

The reliability analyses reported earlier and the correlations among the models reported by J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) suggest instead that organizations may mix the models rather than that there are only two models. In addition to the correlations between the one-way and the two-way models, for example, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989, p. 40) also reported correlations among press agentry and public information and one or both of the two-way models in some organizations.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989, pp. 56-57) reported evidence from Cupp (1985) and Nelson (1986) that organizations change models of public relations as situations and issues change or that they use different models for different programs. Cupp (1985), for example, found that chemical companies that practiced the public information model in normal times turned to the two-way symmetrical model in a crisis. Similarly, L. Grunig (1986) found that the organizations she studied shifted from one model to another as they dealt with activist groups.

What, then, can we conclude about the four models as a positive theory? They can be reliably measured, they are valid, and they do exist in real organizations. Organizations often do not practice the models purely, however. Many use different models for different situations and different programs. And, in addition, there may be theoretical reasons yet unexplored for why organizations combine the models--which we explore in the last section of this paper.

WHY DO ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICE THE FOUR MODELS?

In much of our research on the models of public relations, we have predicted that there will be a logical relationship between the structure and environment of an organization and the

model or models of public relations it practices. This research began with J. Grunig (1976) and continued through 14 studies reviewed in J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989).

The research on why organizations practice the four models has followed trends in organizational sociology (described, e.g., in Robbins, 1990). Until recently, most organizational sociologists believed that organizations develop structures that are appropriate for their environments and their technology. Research has provided only minimal support for these structural and environmental theories--both in sociology and in our research on models of public relations. The least support for a relationship between environments and the models of public relations has come from studies that have used strictly empirical measures of environmental variables (E. Pollack, 1984; McMillan, 1984, 1987; Fabiszak, 1985; R. Pollack, 1986). Studies that have used qualitative observations of the environment of the organizations sampled (Hardwick, 1980; J. Grunig, 1984; Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985b; Turk, 1985) have found a stronger relationship with the models, although that relationship still is relatively weak.

Although we think that organizations *should* practice two-way and symmetrical communication when their environments are complex and turbulent, many--if not most--organizations with such environments do not practice public relations in the way our theory predicted. We have concluded, therefore, that the theoretical relationship between the models of public relations and an organization's environment and structure is more normative than positive.

To develop a positive theory, we have turned to the power-control approach of explaining the behavior of organizations, which has become the dominant theory in organizational sociology. According to the power-control theory, organizations do what they do because a coalition of the most powerful people in that organization--the "dominant coalition"-- chooses to do so. Following this perspective, we have tried to explain why the dominant coalition chooses to practice public relations as it does. Three concepts seem to be important: the culture of the organization, the

potential of the public relations department, and the "schema" for public relations in the organization.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has a strong influence both on who holds power and on how the organization practices public relations. The relationship between culture and power seems to be circular: people in power develop the culture of an organization and organizational culture influences who gains power.

In a study of 10 Blue Cross-Blue Shield organizations, Buffington (1988) conceptualized organizational culture according to a typology developed by Ernest (1985). Ernest defined four cultures by the interaction of two dimensions: authoritarian vs. democratic and reactive vs. proactive. "Systematized" cultures are authoritarian and reactive. "Entrepreneurial" cultures are authoritarian and proactive. "Interactive" cultures are democratic and reactive. "Integrated" cultures are democratic and proactive.

Nine of the 10 Blue Cross-Blue Shield organizations studied either had integrated or entrepreneurial cultures. Six of the nine had entrepreneurial (authoritarian/proactive) cultures. As one would expect, five of these six organizations had their highest scores on the press agentry model of public relations. In the three organizations with integrated cultures (democratic/proactive), the two-way symmetrical model was used in combination with the two-way asymmetrical and press agentry models.

Sriramesh, J. Grunig, and Buffington (in prep) reduced this and other typologies of organizational culture to a continuum between authoritarian and participative cultures. Authoritarian cultures generally use a closed-system approach to management and participative cultures an open-system approach. Evidence of the importance of these cultures came from R. Pollack's (1986) study of scientific organizations. R. Pollack developed several questionnaire items to measure Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien's (1973) concepts of "knowledge of" and "knowledge

about" science--concepts that can be associated with closed- and open-system styles of management.

"Knowledge of" science comes from within the science system and reinforces that system. "Knowledge about" science comes from outside the system and is more critical of it. Authoritarian cultures should be more likely to value "knowledge of" the organization and participative cultures "knowledge about" the organization. R. Pollack (1986) found such correlations among these two types of knowledge and the four models of public relations. Valuing "knowledge of" science correlated with press agentry (.31) and public information (.28). "Knowledge about" science correlated with the two-way symmetrical model (.20) and the two-way asymmetrical model (.13), but the latter correlation was not statistically significant.

Differences in culture manifest themselves in the ways in which the dominant coalition in an organization exercises power. Although an open-system style of management should work best for most organization, normatively; most do not use that system because the dominant coalition believes that it can maintain its power more easily through a closed system approach (Robbins, 1990)--an approach that includes asymmetrical communication. Concurrently, the dominant coalition typically believes that an open, symmetrical system threatens their power.

Potential of the Public Relations Department

According to our definition, public relations departments have more potential if they are headed by a manager rather than a technician, if practitioners in the department--especially the senior person--have training and knowledge of the two-way symmetrical model, and if men and women have equal opportunity in the department. The research reported in J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) supports the proposition that the greater the potential of the public relations department, the more likely it will be that the senior person in the department will be in the dominant coalition and the more likely that the organization will practice the two-way symmetrical model.

Earlier in this paper, we reported strong correlations between the managerial role and the two-way models. In addition, several studies have found positive correlations between the extent to which the top public relations person has formal education in public relations and the extent to which the organization practices the two-way models, especially the two-way symmetrical model, and negative correlations with the other models (Nanni, 1980; E. Pollack, 1984; Fabiszak, 1985; Wetherell, 1989) J. Grunig (1976), Nanni (1980), Buffington (1988), and Wetherell (1989) also found relationships between professionalism and the two-way models of public relations--especially the symmetrical model. Indices of professionalism include, for example, membership and participation in professional societies and readership of professional publications.

In addition, Wetherell (1989) developed indices of the extent to which respondents had specific knowledge needed to practice each model. The indices produced the strongest correlations to date between knowledge and the four models of public relations. Those with knowledge needed for the two-way models were most likely to practice them. Those practicing the two-way models also had the requisite knowledge for the one-way models. Those practicing the one-way models, however, did not have the knowledge needed for the two-way models.

Schema for Public Relations

Several studies (Nanni, 1980; McMillan, 1984, 1987; E. Pollack, 1984; Fabiszak, 1985) have reported positive correlations between the two-way symmetrical model and the extent to which senior management supports and understands public relations or has formal training in public relations. These same variables correlate negatively with press agentry and public information and insignificantly with the two-way asymmetrical model. These results suggest that the way in which senior managers define and understand public relations produces what we call a "schema" for public relations in the organization.

Cognitive psychologists define a schema as a large, integrated block of knowledge that people develop to make sense of their world. Markus & Zajonc (1985, p. 145) captured the

essence of the meaning of schema as we use it here when they defined a schema as a subjective "theory" about how the world operates.

People in general have many different--and usually confused--schemas for public relations, and members of dominant coalitions seldom provide exceptions to this generalization. The way in which members of the dominant coalition conceptualize public relations, in turn, essentially dictates how an organization practices it. Often the schema for public relations allows for the practice of only one of the models. Maymi (1987) found, for example, that managers in the three sports organizations she studied could not conceive of public relations as anything other than press agentry.[2] Nelson (1986) found that the dominant coalition of a telecommunication company defined public relations only as media relations and as a combination of the two-way asymmetrical and press agentry models. The bank she studied identified community publics as most strategic, however, and had a schema for public relations that included the two-way symmetrical model.

The confusion between public relations and marketing also imposes a limited schema on the public relations function in many organizations. Maymi (1987), for example, found that the sports organizations she studied, with a schema of public relations as press agentry, subsumed public relations under marketing. Fabiszak (1985) found that emphasis on marketing in hospitals correlated most strongly with the two-way asymmetrical model.

Research suggests that the schema for public relations can be enlarged in one of two ways. The first way already has been articulated: Organizations with senior public relations managers trained and knowledgeable in two-way symmetrical public relations often become members of the dominant coalition where they can deepen the organization's schema for public

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[2]Moreland (1989), however, provided evidence that the two-way symmetrical model is practiced by the Washington Bullets in the National Basketball Association.

relations.[3] The second way is suggested by Nanni's (1980) and McMillan's (1984) finding of a relationship between senior managers having taken courses or having other training in public relations and the practice of the two-way models: Educate members of the dominant coalition in a model of public relations other than press agentry or public information.

Gender of the Practitioner

Several feminist scholars of public relations have pointed out the similarity between the presuppositions of the two-way symmetrical model--such as cooperation, negotiation, and compromise--and the characteristics of women. Wetherell (1989) conducted an extensive review of research on gender in the psychological and management literature, which supported the likelihood of a link between feminity and the two-way symmetrical model. Data from a national sample of practitioners did not at first confirm that relationship. Instead, Wetherell (1989) found that people with feminine characteristics--which includes both men and women--were more likely to practice and to prefer to practice the press agentry and public information models.

Further analysis of the data revealed, however, that feminity correlated with the practice of and preference for the two-way symmetrical model when the effect of the managerial role was controlled. The managerial role correlated with the practice of both two-way models and with masculinity. Although feminine characteristics enhance the ability of a practititioner to practice the two-way symmetrical model, women--and perhaps men with feminine characteristics--often do not get into the managerial role where they can practice that model. Thus, Wetherell's (1989) study suggests that it is crucial for women to develop strategies for overcoming the discrimination and

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[3]Bissland and Rentner (1988) also found, however, that practitioners who understand two-way symmetrical public relations can be demoralized by an organizational schema that does not include that model. They found that two-thirds of a national sample of practitioners preferred the two-way symmetrical model but that two-thirds also believed that management preferred one of the other models. A discrepancy between the model preferred by the practitioner and by management correlated with job dissatisfaction.

socialization that keeps them out of the managerial role if organizations are to use their feminine characteristics to enhance the excellence of their public relations programs.

When Does the Dominant Coalition Choose Excellent Public Relations?

The research reported here and in J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) shows, then, that the dominant coalition of an organization influences public relations first when it identifies strategic publics in the environment as the target for public relations--publics such as employees, the financial community, activist groups or consumers. The dominant coalition then turns the problem over to the public relations department and dictates which model would be an appropriate strategy for communicating with the strategic public.

Which model the dominant coalition chooses depends on whether the dominant coalition feels threatened by the model and whether that model fits with organizational culture, the schema for public relations in the organization, and whether the public relations department has the potential to carry out the preferred model. Potential is enhanced by having communication managers, people with knowledge of symmetrical public relations, and people with feminine characteristics in the department. Public relations directors who have knowledge or training in either the two-way symmetrical or asymmetrical model and in the managerial role more often will be members of the dominant coalition. In the dominant coalition, public relations directors can influence organizational culture, the strategic public chosen, and the model of public relations to be used for each public.

Previously, we described the two-way symmetrical model as characteristic of excellent public relations. An organization with a turbulent, complex environment and an organic structure should find the symmetrical model to be a rational choice for its public relations programs. Rationality alone, however, is not a sufficient explanation for the practice of public relations. To practice symmetrical public relations, the organization also must have a public relations director

who is knowledgeable in that model of public relations and who is a member of the dominant coalition in an organization with an open, participative culture.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICE THE FOUR MODELS?

When J. Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 22) formulated the four models of public relations they speculated about the extent to which organizations practice each of the models and about the kinds of organizations most likely to practice them. They estimated that 50 percent of organizations practice public information, 20 percent two-way asymmetrical public relations, and 15 percent each press agentry and two-way symmetrical public relations.

J. Grunig and Hunt also said they believed that press agentry most often is practiced in sports, theatre, and product promotion. They thought that public information would be most common in government organizations but that it also would be practiced by nonprofit organizations, associations, and many businesses. They thought that competitive businesses and public relations firms would practice the two-way asymmetrical model and that regulated businesses and public relations firms would practice the two-way symmetrical model.

Since J. Grunig and Hunt made their initial speculations, 13 studies have been conducted that have produced mean scores on the indices of the four models for different kinds of organizations. We have consolidated these data in Table 1. Several patterns can be identified in that table, most of which show that J. Grunig and Hunt sometimes were accurate in their predictions but frequently totally inaccurate. They were quite accurate, for example, in predicting that press agentry would be most common in sports public relations, as supported by Maymi's (1987) case studies of three sports organizations.

J. Grunig and Hunt were quite inaccurate, however, when they predicted that public information would be the most common model practiced. Studies based on samples of respondents from all types of organizations (J. Grunig, 1984; Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985; Ossareh, 1987; Wetherell, 1989) consistently show press agentry to be the most common form of

Table 1
Mean Scores on Indices of Four Models of Public Relations
in Different Types of Organizations from 13 Studies

	N	*Press Agentry*	*Public Information*	*Two-Way Asymmetrical*	*Two-Way Symmetrical*
General Samples of Practitioners					
J. Grunig (1984)[1]	52	3.23	2.77	3.16	2.90
Schneider [aka L. Grunig] (1985b)[1]	75	3.12	2.92	2.95	2.81
Ossareh (1987)[1]	421	3.18	2.81	3.11	2.95
Wetherell (1989)[2]	378				
Actually Practiced		9.76	9.18	7.65	7.89
Prefer to Practice		8.65	8.16	11.82	11.70
Knowledge to Practice		11.35	13.32	8.39	9.07
Sports Organizations					
Maymi (1987)[2]	3	18.65	13.61	5.85	5.23
Hospitals					
Fabiszak (1985)[1]	180	3.30	3.05	3.04	3.06
Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plans					
Buffington[1]	10	3.39	2.88	3.23	3.21
Associations					
McMillan (1984)[1]	116	3.21	2.89	2.90	2.88
Federal Government Agencies					
E. Pollack (1984)[1]	310	2.95	3.01	2.65	2.73
State Government Agencies					
Turk (1985)[1]	12	2.80	3.13	2.82	2.92
Scientific Organizations					
R. Pollack (1986)[1]					
Total	178	2.90	3.22	2.89	3.02
Government	34	2.98	3.50	2.77	3.04
Nonprofit	62	2.91	3.28	2.76	3.04
Corporations	77	2.87	3.06	3.03	2.99
Reporter Ratings of Government Science Agencies					
Habbersett (1983)[1]	249	3.69	4.00	3.40	2.66
(Nelson, 1986) Case Studies[1]					
Bank	1	3.26	2.87	3.13	3.76
Telecommunication Co.	1	3.85	2.85	3.85	3.13

[1]Based on a Likert-type 5-point scale.
[2]Based on an open-end fractionation scale with a square-root transformation. A score of 10 represents an average model for an average organization.

public relations. The means for the other three models tend to be similar, although public information generally is the lowest of the three. In studies of specific types of organizations, this pattern also was true in associations (McMillan, 1984, 1987), hospitals (Fabiszak, 1985), and Blue Cross and Blue Shield medical plans (Buffington, 1988).

The pattern differed substantially in government agencies, however, where J. Grunig and Hunt's predictions were quite accurate. In government, public information consistently was the most common model, although press agentry was not far behind (Habbersett, 1983; E. Pollack, 1984; Turk, 1985; R. Pollack, 1986). The public information model especially was strong in scientific organizations (Habbersett, 1983; R. Pollack, 1986).

Although the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models did not show up as the dominant form of public relations in any of the studies, the mean scores generally fell at about the middle of the scales used to measure them. This indicates that many organizations within the samples did indeed practice these models. When these models were practiced, the two-way symmetrical model was more common than the asymmetrical in governmental organizations. The two-way asymmetrical was most common in corporations (see especially R. Pollack, 1986).

When Turk (1985) classified 12 agencies in the Louisiana state government by the predominant model practiced, she found that five practiced the two-way symmetrical model, four the press agentry model, two the two-way asymmetrical model, and one the press agentry model. In short, individual government agencies did practice the symmetrical model even though the public information model had the highest mean score across all of the government agencies.

Van Dyke (1989) found a similar pattern for 45 U. S. Navy public affairs officers. He used a single item to measure each model of public relations and asked the PAOs to select the item that best described Navy public affairs offices. Forty nine percent selected the two-way symmetrical model, 29 percent the public-information model, 16 percent the two-way asymmetrical model, and 7 percent the press agentry model. Van Dyke also looked at data about

the way Navy PAOs performed, however, and concluded that their work corresponded more to the public-information model than the two-way symmetrical model, "disseminating truthful information ... but lacking efforts to evaluate communication effect or efficiency" (p. 52).

Wetherell's (1989) study, however, may have produced the most accurate estimates of the practice of the four models--using methods now being used in the IABC excellence study. She used a fractionation scale to measure the models, an open-end scale that allowed organizations to provide any number from zero to as high as the respondents wanted to go to estimate how well items described their public relations. With the fractionation scale, respondents are told that 100 is the average score for a typical item for a typical organization. Researchers then take the square root of the response to reduce the skew of the data. Thus, Table 1 provides respondents' estimates of the extent to which their organizations practice the models in comparison to an average of 10. The mean for press agentry is right at this average, suggesting that it is the typical model in practice. Public information is just below, two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical score at 7.89 and 7.65, respectively--high enough to show they are practiced but below what respondents consider to be average for all organizations.

Wetherell (1989) also developed an index to measure the extent to which practitioners said they would *like to practice* each of the four models and to measure the extent to which they possessed the knowledge needed to practice each model. These results, too, reveal what seem to be meaningful generalizations about typical public relations practitioners. When respondents reported their preferred model, the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models jumped into a virtual tie for first place with scores just below 12 while press agentry and public information dropped to 8.65 and 8.16 respectively. Bissland and Rentner (1988) corroborated this finding, when they found that two-thirds of the practitioners in their sample preferred the symmetrical model. In Wetherell's (1989) study, however, practitioners reported that they had the most knowledge about how to practice the public information (13.32) and press agentry (11.35) models

--reflecting, no doubt, their journalistic backgrounds. Practitioners reported that they possess less of the knowledge needed to practice the two-way models.

Gaudino, Fritch, and Haynes (1989) tested J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) contention that regulated businesses would be most likely to practice the two-way symmetrical model in a study of 27 utilities. They concluded that the utilities did indeed practice public relations in a way similar to the two-way symmetrical model. However, even though the utilities perceived mutual understanding with publics as their goal and had set up mechanisms for dialogue, they generally had asymmetrical results in mind. They believed that if publics were "educated," they would agree with the organization. "If you knew what I knew, you'd make the same decision" was the assumption underlying what on the surface was symmetrical public relations.

Although most of these studies have looked for patterns in the types of organizations that practice the models, two studies suggest that individual public relations programs within an overall public relations function may be a more meaningful place to look for differences in the models. Earlier, we reported that Cupp (1985) had found that chemical companies practiced a different model during a crisis than in pre-crisis public relations programs. Nelson (1986) conducted two case studies, one of a bank and another of a telecommunication company. The bank had identified community publics as most strategic and used the two-way symmetrical model to communicate with them (Table 1). The telecommunication company had identified consumers as most strategic and used two-way asymmetrical public relations and press agentry for its marketing communication program.

In conclusion, research supports the idea that models of public relations vary among types of organizations and that they vary among programs within organizations. The variation among organizations probably occurs for historical reasons. For example, public information is most common in government because of historical restrictions placed on its practice there. The variation by programs probably is strategic: For some programs (such as communication with

activists, during a crisis, or with government) symmetrical communication may be the only choice.

The research reported here also is sobering for the pursuit of excellence in public relations. Organizations practice the least excellent models, press agentry and public information, more than the excellent model, two-way symmetrical public relations. It also is encouraging: Many organizations do practice the excellent model, and most practitioners would like to practice it if they had the knowledge necessary to do so and conditions in their organizations were favorable for its practice.

IS THE TWO-WAY SYMMETRICAL MODEL THE EXCELLENT APPROACH TO PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Throughout this paper, we have argued that the two-way symmetrical model will be a characteristic of excellent public relations programs--even though there are situations and environments for which organizations can make do with the other models of public relations. Excellent public relations does not exist in a vacuum, however. Throughout this book, we have maintained that the characteristics we have identified of excellent departments make them excellent because these characteristics make their organizations more effective.

Research to date provides evidence that the two-way symmetrical model makes organizations more effective. Two types of research have been done: on the ethics of public relations and on the effectiveness of the models in achieving public relations objectives. Essentially, this research shows that the two-way symmetrical model is the most ethical approach to public relations and that ethical public relations also is the model most effective in meeting organizational goals.

Ethics of the Models

Discussions of the ethics of public relations frequently hinge on the relativism of an issue, an ideology, or a behavior. Is it ethical, for example, to promote guns, smoking, abortion, or

alcohol? J. Grunig (1989) argued that the models other than the symmetrical one can be used to justify almost any cause. Based on the apparent assumption that all public relations is asymmetrical, Olasky (1987) and Gandy (1982) did critical research to support the argument that all public relations is unethical. Dozier (1989), likewise, argued that the symmetrical model of public relations is the only model "*inherently* consistent with the concept of social responsibility" (p. 5).

The two-way symmetrical model avoids the problem of ethical relativism because it defines ethics as a *process* of public relations rather than an *outcome*. Symmetrical public provides a forum for dialogue, discussion, and discourse on issues for which people with different values generally come to different conclusions. As long as the dialogue is structured according to ethical rules, the outcome should be ethical--although not usually one that fits the value system of any competing party perfectly.

Pearson (1989a, 1989b, 1989c) has produced the best-developed ethical rationale for the symmetrical model, based primarily on Habermas' (1984) concept of the ideal communication system. In Pearson (1989b), for example, he developed a set of rules for ethical, symmetrical public relations and provided practical advice for evaluating a public relations program by the extent to which those rules have been followed.

Effectiveness of the Models

Although research supports the idea that the two-way symmetrical model makes public relations more ethical, senior managers of organizations who are oriented to the bottom line also want to know whether it pays for their organizations to be ethical. Research to date suggests that it does. Several studies have shown the ineffectiveness of the press agentry, public information, and two-way asymmetrical models. Although L. Grunig (1986) found that none of the 31 organizations she studied had used the two-way symmetrical model to deal with activist groups, she also found that none of the other models reduced conflict with these groups. Lauzen (1986)

found that franchising organizations that used the two-way symmetrical model in combination with the press agentry and two-way asymmetrical models reduced their conflict with franchise holders. Because the franchises combined the three models, however, we cannot conclude whether the symmetrical model alone would have been more effective.

In critical studies of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and of fund raising programs in higher education, Childers (1989) and Kelly (1989) documented the failure of asymmetrical models to contribute to organizational goals or to the public interest. Studies of media relations also have demonstrated the superiority of the symmetrical model or the failure of other models. Turk (1986) concluded that public information officers using that model in state agencies had little effect in influencing the "agency picture portrayed by the news media" (pp. 24-25). Habbersett (1983) found that science reporters strongly supported a set of symmetrical procedures for media relations. Theus (1989) measured the extent to which news reports on a sample of organizations were discrepant from the way the organizations thought the stories should have been reported. The more open and symmetrical an organization's communication system, she found, the less the discrepancy in news coverage.

Pavlik (1989) used game theory to compare the benefits of asymmetrical and symmetrical public relations to organizations. In situations in which organizations have greater power than their publics, he concluded, they can get the greatest payoff from asymmetrical public relations. He added, however, that publics now have greater power than they had in the past. In a situation of roughly equal power, game theory showed, organizations get the greatest payoff from symmetrical public relations.

With growing evidence in hand that the two-way symmetrical model is both more ethical and more effective than the other models, therefore, we turn finally to recent theoretical developments that are relevant to that model.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYMMETRICAL MODEL

> To know all your neighbors on the global level does not mean that you will automatically love them all; it does not, in and of itself, introduce a reign of peace and brotherhood. But to be potentially in touch with everybody at least makes fighting more uncomfortable. It becomes easier to argue instead.
>
> --Isaac Asimov
> *The Fourth Revolution*

Mixed Motives in the Two-Way Symmetrical Model

Although we have systematically built a case for the superiority of the two-way symmetrical model in this paper, many practitioners and scholars of public relations counterargue that the persuasion inherent in the asymmetrical models is not unethical or ineffective. Miller (1989), for example described persuasion as a natural way in which people attempt to control their symbolic environment. Many, if not most, practitioners consider themselves to be advocates for or defenders of their organizations and cite the advocacy system in law as an analogy.

In contrast, Ehling (1984, 1985) developed a theory of public relations as conflict management that states, in essence, that only symmetrical communication management can be considered to be public relations. Others add, however, that persuasion is not inherently asymmetrical. Cheney (1989), for example, argued that organizations can encourage understanding through a process in which they and their publics simultaneously attempt to persuade each other:

> Organizations, specifically their communications officers, should represent interests in such a way that both persuades and allows for others to persuade. Here we echo Henry Johnstone's, 1981, dictum to maximize persuasiveness and persuasibility for all parties to communication. That is, corporate communications should not *limit* possibilities for understanding, but rather *encourage* them. (p. 148)

J. Grunig (1989) also argued that symmetrical communication can include what Petty and Cacioppo (1981) called the central route to persuasion (persuasion based on reasoned argument):

> The central route to persuasion usually is the first move that people make when using the symmetrical model to resolve conflict. However, conflicting persons or systems must be willing to switch their strategy from persuasion to negotiation or compromise when the central route does not bring about the direct change in attitude and behavior they want, as it seldom does. (p. 13, fn. 13)

Hellweg (1989) reviewed theories of organizational communication in light of the four models of public relations. She found evidence of the asymmetrical models in what has been called the "managerial bias" in organizational communication--a bias in support of the goals of management rather than employees. She added that "interpretive" theorists have begun to examine organizations from the perspective of employees. Even if organizational consultants use that approach, she went on, they still cannot avoid some bias in favor of management because management hires them and works with them to formulate solutions to communication problems.

Thus, Hellweg pointed out that even symmetrical techniques such as quality circles and team building may produce asymmetrical results through what Tompkins and Cheney (1985) called "concertive" or "unobtrusive" control.[4] This means that by allowing participation in decision making or by facilitating team work, organizations coopt employees to accept control in a much more subtle way than they do when they use coercive or overtly persuasive means.

Hellweg (1989) thus explained that what is symmetrical or asymmetrical depends on one's perspective. What an organization considers to be "active listening" or responding to the concerns of publics might be considered advocacy or unobtrusive control by a third party. Thus, she suggested that:

> The issue of whether two-way symmetrical organizations exist may be resolved by developing a continuum between the two-way asymmetric practice and a true two-way symmetric practice, such that organizations both internally and externally can be measured more by an infinite number of points than an "either-or" picture might suggest. (p. 22)

Murphy (in press) examined symmetrical public relations from the perspective of game theory by contrasting "games of pure cooperation" with "mixed motive games." In pure cooperation, an organization would try to adapt to what the public wants and vice versa. The result usually is unsatisfactory to both sides, Murphy said, because by bending over backward to

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[4]For a recent study of unobtrusive control in the U. S. Forest Service, see Bullis and Tompkins (1989).

do what the other side wants neither side ends up with a satisfactory solution. Instead, organizations have mixed motives: They want both to forward their own interests but also to reach a solution acceptable to the other side.[5]

Conrad (1985) defined a mixed-motive approach to conflict management as one in which both parties "perceive the issue from both their own and the other parties' perspectives" (p. 242). Likewise, Wilson and Putnam (1990) concluded that bargaining involves mixed motives, motives that simultaneously are cooperative and competitive. As a result, they said, bargaining incorporates "compliance gaining tactics with problem-solving and conflict management activities" (p. 375). "Compliance-gaining tactics" is a term popular among researchers to describe attempts to persuade (Reardon, Sussman & Flay, 1989).

Murphy (in press) thus suggested that the two-way symmetrical model might be described as the mixed-motive model because it incorporates both asymmetrical and symmetrical tactics. She then argued that a mixed-motive model does a better job of describing the behavior of public relations practitioners in the real world than does a purely symmetrical model.

Hellweg's (1989) suggestion of a continuum of asymmetrical and symmetrical practices also could explain the correlations we and others have found between the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models. Thus, we believe the theory of models can be improved if we conceptualize the four models in terms of two continua: one of *craft* and one of *professional* public relations (Figure 1).

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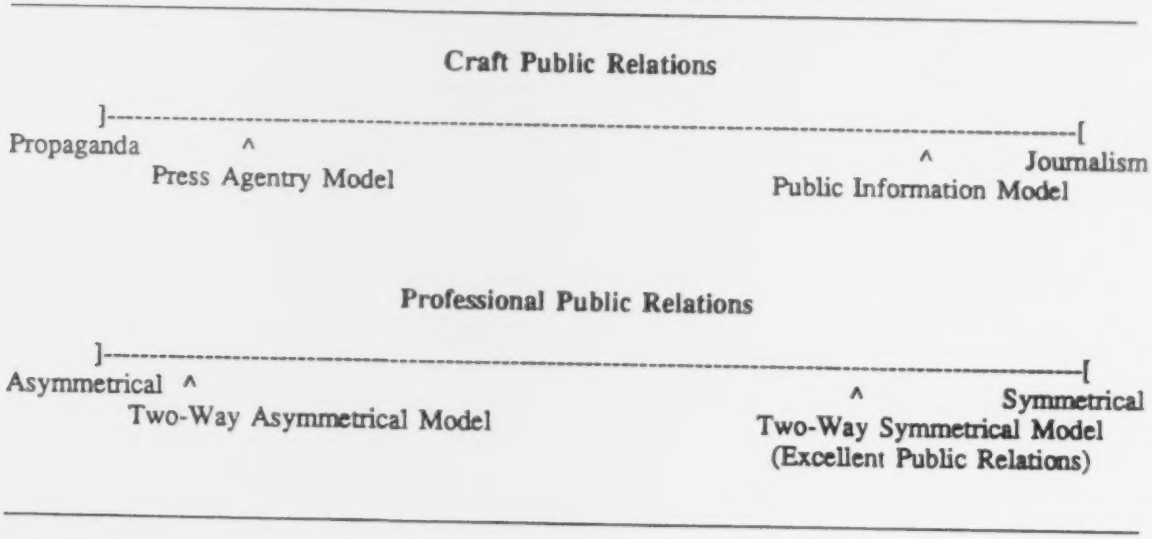
[5]Murphy's (in press) description of pure cooperation is similar to what Buchholz (1989, pp. 507-510) described as an accommodative approach to issues management: adapting to what the public wants as best possible and getting on with business as usual. He contrasted the accommodative approach with reactive, proactive, and interactive approaches to issues. A reactive organization fights change, a proactive organization attempts to control the environment so that no change is necessary. An interactive organization tries to resolve an issue through negotiation. Murphy has equated symmetry with accommodation, although we have seen it more as interaction.

Practitioners of craft public relations seem to believe that their job consists solely of the application of communication techniques and as an end-in-itself. To them, the purpose of public relations simply is to get publicity or information into the media or other channels of communication. Practitioners of professional public relations, in contrast, rely on a body of knowledge as well as technique and see public relations as having a strategic purpose for an organization: to manage conflict and build relationships with strategic publics that limit the autonomy of the organization.

In practice, professional public relations involves both asymmetrical (compliance gaining) tactics and symmetrical (problem solving) tactics. However, we hypothesize that the most effective public relations, excellent public relations, will fall more toward the symmetrical end of the continuum than the asymmetrical end. Thus, Figure 1 places "excellent" public relations at the same point as the two-way symmetrical model. But the figure also shows that that model contains asymmetrical components.

Figure 1
Four Models of Public Relations Placed on Two Continua



Elaborating a Symmetrical Theory of Public Relations

If this reconceptualized model of symmetrical public relations is a major characteristic of excellence in public relations, a logical next step for public relations theorists is to develop the model further as a normative theory to guide the practice of public relations. To begin that process, we review theories of dispute resolution, negotiation, mediation, and conflict management in this final section because of the similarities in the presuppositions of these theories and those of the symmetrical model. These theories have been developed in law, speech communication, psychology, and sociology. Few public relations theorists have examined these theories, although Gossen and Sharp (1987) have written a practical article on how "dispute resolution" can be used in public relations.

We have identified the following seven conceptual themes in the literature that have relevance to a theory of public relations.

Interdependence and Relationships. A central proposition of our study of excellence for the IABC Research Foundation is that public relations increases the effectiveness of organizations by managing the interdependence of the organization with publics that restrict its autonomy. Organizations manage interdependence by building long-term, stable relationships with those publics. These same themes of interdependence and relationships also can be found throughout the literature on conflict and negotiation (e.g., Conrad, 1985, p. 241; Fisher & Brown, 1988, p. 166; Gray, 1989, p. 11; Jandt, 1985, p. 135; Keltner, 1987, p. v; Wilson & Putnam, 1990, p. 375).

Conrad (1985), for example, stated that "grounds for conflict arise whenever people are involved in interdependent and interactive relationships" (p. 241). Keltner (1987) said that the goal of negotiation is a settlement that enhances future relationships between parties, while Jandt (1985) said "the relationship is more important than the conflict" (p. 135). Fisher and Brown (1988) followed up the best-selling *Getting to Yes* (Fisher & Ury, 1981) with *Getting Together*, a book with the subtitle, *Building a Relationship that Gets to Yes*. Whereas *Getting to Yes*

addressed "particular transactions," Fisher and Brown (1988) emphasized building "working relationships."

Conflict, Struggle, and Shared Mission. Interdependence produces relationships and the need for public relations. Interdependence produces a need for public relations because it also produces conflict and struggle or, in some cases, a shared mission. Unless relationships are developed that help to manage conflict, conflict can "degenerate into power struggles or escalate into intense moral confrontations" (Conrad, 1985, p. 243).

Keltner (1987, p. 4) described this degenerative process as a "struggle spectrum," which proceeds through six stages: mild difference, disagreement, dispute, campaign, litigation, and fight or war. In the first three stages, communication takes the form of discussion, negotiation, arguing, and bargaining. In the "campaign" stage, communication moves to persuasion and pressure. It becomes advocacy and debate in the litigation stage. In the final stage, communication gives way to violent conflict. When these stages are applied to public relations, we can see that the two-way symmetrical model can work at all stages--especially the early ones--whereas organizations using the asymmetrical models usually wait until the campaign stage to practice public relations.[6]

In her studies of activist groups, L. Grunig (1986) found that conflict between organizations and activists did not always proceed from beginning to end of this spectrum. Many activist groups began by campaigning against an organization or seeking litigation or regulation

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[6]Public relations can be ludicrous when both sides of a dispute engage in asymmetrical campaigns, based generally on the press agentry or two-way asymmetrical models--but sometimes on the public information model. One side may "win," but such campaigns rarely resolve conflict. In an "expose" of asymmetrical public relations practices, the *Washington Post Magazine* (Carlson, 1990) described a large number of asymmetrical campaigns with the following teaser on the cover: "Teddy bears lobby Congress. The Senate's filled with caskets. Meryl Streep takes on the apple growers. A congresswoman sledgehammers Japan. And the DEA scores a bag of crack so President Bush can hold it up on TV. Wait a minute--is *everything* in Washington public relations?"

but then moved to negotiation at the first sign that the organization was willing to seek a mutually acceptable solution.

Communication is not a magical solution to conflict, however, for as Jandt (1985) pointed out, "failure to communicate is a popular explanation for a variety of human maladies" and "conflict could not occur without communication " (p. 71). What is important, he added, is the effectiveness of the communication.

Just as communication can both cause and reduce conflict, so Fisher and Brown (1988) pointed out that a relationship can be a good one without being friendly:

> The Bible tells us, "Love thine enemy," but does not suggest that we should approve of his (*sic*) conduct. We should care, show concern, be willing to listen, and be willing to work with him (*sic*) in a problem-solving relationship. (p. 153)

Fisher and Brown (1988) also pointed out that good communication can take place without friendship: "Communicating effectively with those with whom we have fundamental disagreements is more difficult but often more important than communicating with those we like" (p. 85).

Gray (1989) developed the premise that competition no longer is effective in an interdependent world. Instead, she proposed a political and social order based on collaboration. Collaboration differs from cooperation and coordination, which would be on the far-right end of the asymmetrical-symmetrical continuum developed in the previous section. Collaboration is not an "idealistic panacea," according to Gray (1989, p. 24). Collaboration would fall near the point on the continuum of professional public relations where we placed the two-way symmetrical model: It is the "unfolding of a negotiated order" (p. 233).

Gray also introduced the concept of shared mission, which seems to increase the relevance of the symmetrical model to public relations. Many public relations programs, such as fundraising or health campaigns, are motivated more by the need for support from a public than from

conflict. Gray included both in her theory when she pointed out that the motivation to collaborate may be "induced by conflict or by a shared vision concerning the problem" (p. 7).

In summary, then, the "collaborative" model could be another name for the two-way symmetrical model, just as Murphy (in press) suggested naming it the mixed-motive model.

Openness, Trust, and Understanding. Openness, trust, and understanding are concepts cited frequently in the literature on negotiation and conflict; clearly they are crucial symmetrical concepts. Hance, Chess, and Sandman (1988), for example, devoted a chapter of their manual on risk communication to "earning trust and credibility." Wilson and Putnam (1990, p. 386) pointed out that a minimal level of trust is needed in negotiation but that trust always is problematic when motives are mixed. Fisher and Brown (1988) added that trust is a "question of assessing risk, not morality" (p. 128). Gray (1989, p. 266)) added that disputants must negotiate in good faith.

The need for openness can be found in many references to listening in the literature (e.g., Hance, Chess, & Sandman, 1988, p. 16; Fisher & Ury, 1981, p. 35; Keltner, 1987, p. 386). Fisher and Brown (1988) put it this way:

> But the simplest and most powerful rule of thumb is to consult the relationship partner. Really consult. Ask advice before making a decision--and listen carefully. (p.106)

Fisher and Brown (1988) also summarized the value of understanding as an objective for a relationship when they stated that "other things being equal, the better the mutual understanding, the better the working relationship" (p. 64).

Key Concepts: Negotiation, Collaboration, and Mediation. Although we generally have equated these concepts, theorists have distinguished among them in a way that shows two-way symmetrical public relations to be a process of collaboration. Conrad (1985) listed collaboration among five strategies for dealing with conflict: avoidance, accommodation, compromise, competition, and collaboration. He defined collaboration as:

> All parties believing that they should actively and assertively seek a mutually acceptable solution and being willing to spend large amounts of time and energy to reach such an outcome. (p. 243)

Wilson and Putnam (1990) defined negotiation similarly, as a "process whereby two or more parties who hold or believe they hold incompatible goals engage in a give-and take interaction to reach a mutually accepted solution" (p. 375). Gray (1989) tied collaboration to negotiation by defining it as "the unfolding of a negotiated order" (p. 233). As mentioned above, however, Gray's definition went beyond that of Wilson and Putnam when she pointed out that collaboration can be used to pursue common goals as well as to resolve conflicting ones. These definitions add up to a definition of collaboration as the process of negotiation.

Whereas collaboration involves mixed motives, mediation occurs when a neutral third party enters the process of negotiation (Keltner, 1987). Keltner (1987, p. 8) and Jandt (1985, p. 70) agreed, however, that a third party who is perceived as a party to a conflict cannot function as a mediator. Keltner mentioned lawyers and counselors as such non-neutral third parties; we would include public relations practitioners. Thus, two-way symmetrical public relations cannot be described as mediation, although the literature does suggest that public relations people could bring in mediators when they cannot successfully collaborate with publics of an organization to reach a negotiated order.

Process and Strategies. When we turn to the processes and strategies for collaboration that have been articulated in the literature, we arrive at normative theories that public relations practitioners can use to guide symmetrical programs.

These theories suggest first that organizations must set up structured systems, processes, and rules for two-way symmetrical public relations activities. In the words of Fisher and Brown (1988), "A relationship is more like a garden; it is constantly changing. It needs regular attention or it will go to seed" (p. 169). Keltner (1987) called the process "the management of struggle by rules" (p. 6). Several theorists set up principles from which processes and rules can be derived.

Fisher and Ury (1981) have a theory of principled negotiation with four elements: separate the people from the problem; focus on interests, not positions; generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do; and insist that the result be based on some objective standard.

Fisher and Brown (1988) developed a normative strategy they summarize as Be unconditionally constructive":

> This means that in a relationship with you, I should do those things only that are both good for the relationship and good for me--whether or not you reciprocate. (p. xiv)

This principle has six elements: rationality (balancing emotions with reason); understanding (learn how they see things); communication (always consult before deciding--and listen); reliability (be wholly trustworthy, but not wholly trusting); persuasion, not coercion (negotiate side by side); and acceptance (deal seriously with those with whom we differ).

Gray (1989, p. 57) organized the collaborative process into the three phases of problem setting (defining the problem and identifying stakeholders and resources), direction setting (making rules, exploring options, and making decisions), and implementation (building support among consitituencies and monitoring the agreement).

Jandt's (1985) theory of "win-win negotiating" is similar to Fisher and Ury's (1981) principles. He, too, suggested bargaining over interests rather than positions:

> In positional bargaining, negotiations are seen as a contest from which one side will emerge victorious and the other will be defeated. In interest bargaining, each side strives to help the other achieve its goals. (p. 197)

Jandt (1985, pp. 266-267) also set forth a strategy for dealing with the "true scoundrel," the "hardball negotiator." He suggested complaining to a government agency, complaining to a professional society or other association, making the matter public through the media, and making a pest of yourself in other ways. These strategies generally are those that publics, especially activist groups, use against an organization that uses asymmetrical public relations and that can be characterized as a "hardball negotiator."

Perhaps the most extensive set of normative rules for collaborative public relations has come from research on risk communication, especially at the Environmental Communication Research Program at Rutgers University. Chess and Hance (1989) described the general approach developed in this program as follows:

> The traditional agency strategy of "decide, announce, and defend" preempts the ability of communities and other interested constituencies to participate in decisionmaking. It also denies agency officials the opportunity to hear public concerns when they can be addressed more easily. (p. 14)

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (1988) has set forth "Seven Cardinal Rules of Risk Communication" that are normative, two-way symmetrical principles: accept and involve the public as a legitimate partner; plan carefully and evaluate your efforts; listen to the public's specific concerns; be honest, frank, and open; coordinate and collaborate with other credible sources; meet the needs of the media; and speak clearly and with compassion.

An extensive set of similar principles has been developed in several publications at the Rutgers center. For example, Hance, Chess, and Sandman (1988) spelled out more than 100 principles for earning trust and credibility, deciding when to release information, and interacting with the community. On releasing information, for example, they specified symmetrical principles such as:

> If it seems likely that the media or someone else may release the information before you are ready, release it yourself.
>
> If it is likely that the media will "fill in" with information concerning an ongoing story while they are waiting for you to speak, speak first.
>
> If you have decided that you can't communicate right away about the risk, talk to the public about the process you are going through to get more information. *Don't merely remain silent.*

Sandman (1986) stated the case for public participation when he said:

> This sort of genuine public participation is the moral right of the citizenry. It is also likely to yield real improvements in the safety and quality of the facilities that are built. As a practical matter, moreover, public participation that is not mere window-dressing is probably a prerequisite to any community's decision to forgo its veto and accept a facility. (p 456)

Some typical principles from Hance, Chess, and Sandman (1988) for interacting with the community are:

> Recognize that input from the community can help the agency make a better decision.
>
> Find out from communities what type of involvement they would prefer.
>
> When appropriate, develop alternatives to public hearings. In particular, hold smaller, more informal meetings.

The literature on conflict, collaboration, and risk communication, therefore, is rich with practical advice that can be translated into advice for public relations practitioners using the two-way symmetrical model (e.g., Gossen and Sharp, 1987).

Limitations, Obstacles, and Effectiveness. Although Gray (1989) claimed that collaboration is not an idealistic panacea, she did suggest conditions under which it does not work well. Those that seem most relevant to public relations are:

> The conflict is rooted in basic ideological differences.
>
> Substantial power differentials exist or one or more groups of stakeholders cannot establish representation.
>
> The issues are too threatening because of historical antagonisms.
>
> Past interventions have been repeatedly ineffective.

Of these limitations, unequal power emerges frequently in the literature. As Pavlik (1989) pointed out, organizations get the greatest payoff from symmetrical public relations when opposing publics have power equal to that of the organization. Some theorists, however, suggest strategies for empowering the weaker party (Keltner, 1987, p. 33; Jandt, 1985, pp. 155-178). Jandt (1985, p. 171), in particular, said that one party can gain power if it controls something the other party wants. Since most active publics can affect the autonomy of an organization, most can empower themselves and reduce the ability of the organization to lapse into asymmetrical public relations.

Gray (1989, pp. 247-255) also identified several reasons why organizations refuse to collaborate, reasons much like those we have identified as reasons for not practicing the two-way symmetrical model: institutional disincentives (such as environment groups that do not want to dilute their advocacy of a cause), historical and ideological barriers, disparities in power, societal dynamics (such as individualism in the United States), differing perceptions of risk, technical complexity, and political and institutional cultures.

Gray (1989, pp. 256-257) set up criteria for evaluating the success of collaboration--criteria that can be used to evaluate symmetrical public relations programs: Does the outcome satisfy the real issues in dispute? Do the parties feel they affected the outcome? Are the stakeholders willing and able to implement the decision? Does the agreement produce joint gains for the parties? Was communication between the parties increased and the working relationships improved? Has the agreement held up over time? Was the process efficient in terms of time and resources? Does the solution conform to available objective standards? Did the parties perceive the procedures to be fair? Did the procedures conform to accepted standards of procedural fairness?

Finally, Gray (1989, p. 259) reported the results of a study of the effectiveness of collaboration in environmental disputes--data that add to our review of the effectiveness of the two-way symmetrical model reported above. In 78 percent of the disputes, the parties reached agreement; and in 70 percent of those agreements, the agreement was fully implemented. After examining these results for different kinds of disputes, Gray concluded:

> Clearly, the record of collaborations to date is a checkered one. Many experiences contain aspects of both success and failure. While the evidence is not 100 percent favorable, it is heartening. For example, even when parties do not reach agreement, they frequently applaud the process. Moreover, the numbers of disputes and problems for which collaboration is a possible alternative is growing. Finally, as we learn more about what works and what does not, the number of successes should increase. (p. 260)

Mediated Two-Way Symmetrical Communication. Much of the literature reviewed in this section describes public relations activities that rely more on interpersonal communication than is common in public relations, where communication through the mass media or small-scale media such as brochures or newsletters prevails. Although two-way symmetrical public relations does use interpersonal communication more than the other models do, other literature suggests how mediated communication can be made symmetrical.

In a book on communication in developing countries, Hedebro (1982) described how media can encourage people to participate in society. Media can give people *content* that helps them to exert control over their environment, Hedebro said. Media also can use a *form of presentation* that encourages users to "mentally take part in the communication process" and to cdiscover that they need to know more and "need to discuss the article with others." Media can "provide people with relevant and action-oriented knowledge, and they can also show ways to channel such interest" (p. 109).

In their manual on risk communication, similarly, Hance, Chess, and Sandman (1988) recommended that organizations should "provide information that meets people's needs,...even if they don't ask for it" (p. 14). Lemert (1981) called the kind of information recommend by Hedebro and Hance *et al.* "mobilizing information," information that "allows action by persons willing to do so" (Lemert & Larkin, 1979, p. 504).

Dervin (1984) developed an approach she calls "sense-making" that public relations practitioners can use to develop symmetrical information. According to Dervin, most organizations define information as what they think publics need to know. With the sense-making approach, however, practitioners do research to ask people what information they need to understand a situation or to make a decision--an approach that truly makes symmetrical communication "two-way."

THE MAJOR PROPOSITION RESTATED

The two-way symmetrical model of communication, as we have seen, is a real as well as a normative model. It is a model that organizations can use but often do not use because an authoritarian dominant coalition sees the approach as a threat to its power. Two-way symmetrical public relations, however, epitomizes professional public relations and reflects the growing body of knowledge in the field. This ethical approach also contributes to organizational effectiveness more than other models of public relations.

Practitioners of the two-way symmetrical model are not completely altruistic; they also want to defend the interests of their employers--they have "mixed motives." A substantial body of knowledge exists that provides practitioners with advice on how to collaborate both interpersonally with publics and on how to use media symmetrically to communicate with them.

The two-way symmetrical model, as refined in this paper, therefore, is a major component of excellence in public relations and communication management.

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Public Relations Division

Public Relations News Releases and Libel: Extending First Amendment Protections

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Public Relations News Releases and Libel: Extending First Amendment Protections

It is not uncommon for public relations news releases to be filled with opinion and commentary.[1] Such releases can pose some legal problems; however, recent court rulings suggest that as First Amendment protections and fact-opinion distinctions are extended to cover public relations news releases, carefully crafted releases, especially those that primarily contain opinion or commentary, could be becoming relatively "libelproof."

There have been only a handful of reported cases involving libel challenges associated with news releases, but most have resulted in rulings favorable to public relations practitioners, although one initially ended in an unfavorable decision.[2] With such limited jurisprudence in both the relatively new area of opinion writing and libel law and the area of libel and public relations news releases, plus the absence of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that offers guidelines for public relations practitioners to follow in making the fact-opinion distinction, public relations practitioners still need to take precautions when crafting news releases to avoid defamation suits.

The First Amendment protection extended to opinion writing is by no means absolute. In fact, just at a time when First Amendment protections and fact-opinion distinctions have been extended to cover public relations news releases, the U. S. Supreme Court has agreed to review a 15-year-old libel case against a small Ohio newspaper, Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.[3] Some experts are predicting that the

Court could enunciate a "bright-line" rule in Milkovich to give lower courts guidance on how to distinguish between expressions of opinion and statements of fact.

The Milkovich case involves an appeal by a former Ohio high school wrestling coach to overturn rulings by Ohio courts that a sports columnist published statements about the coach that were constitutionally protected expressions of opinion. The columnist wrote that the coach had lied during a hearing conducted in connection with a fight at a wrestling match.

Even though Milkovich does not deal with public relations news releases, an unfavorable outcome for the newspaper could represent a setback for *all* opinion writers and result in the establishment of a narrower definition of what constitutes constitutionally protected opinion. Such guidelines could pose a serious threat to the protection of robust commentary which is now extended not only to news releases, but also to newspaper editorials, political cartoons, opinion columns and television station editorials.[4]

The purpose of this study was to present an overview of both the common law and constitutional privileges protecting the expression of opinion and the various modes of analysis used in making the distinction between statements of fact and expression of opinion. In addition, several recent cases were reviewed to examine problems inherent in making the fact-opinion distinction for public relations practitioners. The goal was to clarify the scope of the privilege and protection afforded to comments about public issues and other matters of public concern and to offer suggestions about

what should be included and excluded in news releases to help ensure that such communications will be less likely to trigger libel suits.

The public relations practitioner has been afforded more constitutional protection for most opinionated statements in news releases and other traditional public relations tools--newsletters, brochures, speeches, reports--as the focus of libel litigation has shifted from its common law origins to First Amendment considerations.[5] Protection is traceable to the common law privilege of fair comment which protected the right of every citizen critic, including the media opinion writer, to fairly express opinions and to comment upon all matters of public interest and general concern.[6] To be fair and reasonable, such comment had to be free of malice under the common law, it could not be made solely for the purpose of causing harm to the person about whom the comment was made and it had to be a statement of opinion and not a misstatement of fact.[7]

Underlying the fair comment privilege is the assumption that all criticism, no matter how foolish, should be protected and that the public is entitled to unfettered, widely disseminated opinion.[8] Two types of expression, "pure" and "mixed," are generally recognized by the courts. "Pure expression" occurs when the public relations practitioner states the facts on which he bases his opinion. It also occurs when both parties to the communication know the facts or assume their existence and the comment is clearly based on those assumed facts. "Mixed expression" is based on facts that have not been stated or cannot be assumed to exist by the

parties to the communcation. It is only the pure type of expression of opinion to which the common law privilege of fair comment has been held to apply.[9]

The fair comment privilege requires that the courts make a distinction, therefore, between statements of opinion and statements of fact--whether directly stated or assumed.[10] As one authority has noted, however, the courts and commentators have not always agreed upon how such distinctions should be made.[11]

While the common law privilege protecting opinionated statements was largely constitutionalized by the Sullivan "actual malice" rule in 1964,[12] the real impetus for the shift away from the fair comment privilege came ten years later when the Supreme Court in a statement not necessary to the decision in Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.[13] stated:

> Under the First Amendment there is no such thing as a false idea. However pernicious an opinion may seem, we depend for its correction not on the conscience of judges and juries but on the competition of other ideas. But there is no constitutional value in false statements of fact. [14]

This declaration, while removing the qualifications and/or conditions of the common law privilege, raises the fact-opinion distinction to the level of constitutionality without affording an analytical approach for the lower courts to follow.[15]

The Supreme Court in Sullivan and its progeny has generally broadened the protection afforded to the public relations practitioner under the "actual malice" rule, but the Court has failed to provide the lower courts adequate guidance in regard to the fact-opinion distinction. Though disagreement exists, the general view is

that the constitutional protection afforded expression of opinion under the Sullivan rule has extended the old common law doctrine of fair comment,[16] incorporated it into the constitutional privilege,[17] or at least left unsettled the question of whether the constitutional rule wholly supplanted the common law privilege.[18]

In any case, it was the Supreme Court's dictum in Gertz that has had the greatest impact upon the fact-opinion distinction. The Restatement (Second) of Torts, for example, notes that the Supreme Court's statement in Gertz that "under the First Amendment that is no such thing as a false idea" indicates that an expression of opinion cannot be the basis of a libel action involving public communication on a matter of public concern.[19] Though private communications on private matters would fall beyond the constitutional privilege,[20] the logic of the constitutional principle would appear to apply to all expression of opinion based on either disclosed or assumed facts.[21]

One commentator has noted, however, that after articulating the fact-opinion distinction, the Court in Gertz made no effort to apply the distinction before deciding the case on other grounds.[22] Indeed, the Supreme Court has been "virtually silent" concerning the fact-opinion distinction, leaving the lower courts to devise their own approaches.[23] In only two cases has the Court expressly addressed the characterization of statements as fact or opinion,[24] but both cases were decided on other grounds. Thus, despite the fact that the Gertz statement is clearly dicta, a majority of the federal circuit courts have accepted the statement as controlling law. [25] At least thirty-two states, plus the District of Columbia and Guam,

have recognized a constitutional privilege protecting expression of opinion.[26]

In a 1984 case, Ollman v. Evans,[27] the U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit, attempted to provide a set of guidelines by delineating "four factors" to be used in assessing whether the average reader would view a statement as fact or as an expression of opinion. Noting that the Supreme Court's "implicit command in Gertz imposed upon both state and federal courts the duty of distinguishing fact from opinion in order "to provide opinions with the requisite, absolute First Amendment protection,"[28] the Ollman court, in one of the most comprehensive decisions to date involving the fact-opinion distinction, set out and amplified a four-step approach to making such a distinction.

The case was spawned by a syndicated column written by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak concerning the appointment of a Marxist professor, Bertell Ollman, to head the Department of Government at the University of Maryland. The Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, sitting en banc, reversed the decision of a three-judge panel, holding that the column was entitled to absolute First Amendment protection as expression of opinion, based upon a four-part test for determining whether a statement is one of fact or opinion.[29] The U.S. Supreme Court, in May 1985 denied a petition for writ of certiorari to review the en banc decision.[30]

The 1984 opinion is more than sixty pages and contains seven separate opinions involving one or more of the eleven federal judges. Two aspects of the case are especially pertinent: first, what was

the nature of the Evans and Novak column which resulted in the libel action, and second, what were the four factors set out by the court and how were they applied in determining the fact-opinion distinction?

The column at issue, published in the *Washington Post* under the headline "The Marxist's Professor's Intentions," opened as follows:

> What is in danger of becoming a frivolous debate over the appointment of a Marxist to head the University of Maryland's department of politics and government has so far ignored this unspoken concern within the academic community: the avowed desire of many political activists to use higher education for indoctrination.[31]

The columnists also quoted an unnamed source as saying: "Ollman has no status within the profession, but is a pure and simple activist." [32]

Ollman's complaint, while not asserting that any quotations were inaccurate, alleged that the column was "totally false and defamatory" and that it denied his reputation as a scholar and portrayed him as a "political activist" who sought to use his classroom for ulterior purposes. Acknowledging that because of the "richness and diversity of language" it was difficult, even impossible, to lay down a "bright-line" rule to distinguish between assertions of fact, and expressions of opinion,[33] the court's majority nevertheless set out a four-part test to be used in assessing whether the average reader would view such statements as fact or opinion.

First, the court said, the "common usage or meaning of the specific language of the challenged statement" should be analyzed to determine whether "the statement has a precise core of meaning for which a consensus of understanding exists, or conversely, whether the statement is indefinite and ambiguous."[34]

Second, courts "should consider the degree to which the statements are verifiable--is the statement objectively capable of proof or disproof?"[35] The court noted that the reason for such an inquiry is simple: "a reader cannot rationally view an unverifiable statement as conveying actual facts."[36]

Third, courts must examine the context in which the statement is made. The statement must be taken as part of a whole, including tone and the use of cautionary language. The court explained that the full context of the statement--the entire column or broadcast--must be considered "inasmuch as other, unchallenged language surrounding the allegedly defamatory statement will influence the average reader's readiness to infer that a particular statement has factual content."[37]

Fourth, the court said there should be consideration of "the broader context in which the statement appears." Different types of writing or commentary have widely varying social conventions which signal to the reader the likelihood of a statement's being either fact or opinion."[38]

Such a four-factor analysis, the court noted, should not be undertaken "in rigid lock-step fashion." Indeed, a logical starting point in applying the fact-opinion analysis might be the broad social context or setting within which the statement appears(the fourth

factor) and the language surrounding the challenged statements(the third factor).[39]

In regard to the context of the Evans and Novak column, the court's majority decided that a "reasonable reader" who perused such a column on the editorial page or
Op-Ed page should be fully aware that the statements found there are not "hard" news and would be predisposed to regard what is found there to be opinion.[40] In analyzing specific allegations in the column, the court noted that the statement concerning Ollman's "status within the profession" was the "most troublesome" of all those alleged by Ollman to be defamatory. Still the court found that a "confluence of factors" led to the conclusion that even those statements were protected opinion.[41] In finding that all the statements in the column were protected opinion, the court cautioned: "Of course, we do not hold that any statement on an editorial or Op-Ed page is constitutionally privileged opinion."[42]

Public relations news releases seem to fall into the same "protected, yet potentially vulnerable" category as editorials and other Op-Ed page material. In Parks v. Steinbrenner,[43] the New York Supreme Court ruled that a major league umpire was libeled when the owner of the New York Yankees baseball team disseminated a press release which stated the owner's opinion that a major league umpire, Dallas Parks, was a "scab" who "has had it in" for the Yankees and had "misjudged" plays. The court noted that the press release did not set forth adequate statements of facts to support the opinions within the release.

The press release also espoused the view that the umpire "doesn't measure up" to standards set by the American League and that the umpire's decision to throw two Yankees players out of a ballgame was "ludicrous."[44] In reaching its decision, the court found that the only statement of fact in the press release was the umpire expelling two Yankee players from a baseball game. The court said: "This fact by itself does not in any way support the opinions proffered; defendant in his statement sets forth no facts which would support his opinion that plaintiff was incompetent and biased." [45]

In 1987, however, the New York Supreme Court overturned the decision in Parks v. Steinbrenner, ruling that the press release that was critical of the umpire constituted protected statements of opinion.[46] In reaching its decision, the court said that the press release constituted "pure opinion" in that it contained facts upon which the opinion was based, including mention that the umpire threw two players out of a game and that Steinbrenner called the umpire a "scab" during an umpire's strike as the reason for the belief that the umpire "has had it in for the Yankees ever since."[47]

In addition, the court relied heavily on the Ollman case in reaching its decision, particularly on Ollman's admonition that in distinguishing between fact and opinion, consideration should be given to the broader social context in which the communication occurs. The court reasoned that "razzing" or "baiting" an umpire in baseball is a venerated American tradition and that in differentiating between fact and opinion, the broader social context surrounding the communication should have signalled to readers of

the press release (that appeared in several newspapers) that what was being read was opinion and "part of the 'robust debate' ingrained in the profession" of baseball umpiring.[48]

In another recent ruling, Karp v. Hill and Knowlton,[49] constitutional protection was extended to opinionated statements in a public relations firm's press release. The press release prepared by the public relations firm of Hill & Knowlton commented upon a court decision in an ongoing court battle between Steven I. Karp, a former senior vice president with Buckingham Corporation (an importer and distributor of wines and liquors), and the Buckingham Corporation which claimed Karp had surreptitiously agreed with two of Buckingham's suppliers to form a new corporation to distribute their products independently of Buckingham and that Karp had misappropriated confidential information and trade secrets from Buckingham.[50] The sentence at issue in the press release stated that Buckingham Corporation viewed the ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, in a case involving Karp and Buckingham Corporation as supporting "our claims that Mr. Karp defrauded Buckingham and that substantial relief should be granted."[51]

Although the court acknowledged that distinguishing fact from opinion is often difficult, it relied heavily on the four-factor test from Ollman in ruling that the statement at issue was opinion and was thus entitled to constitutional protection.[52] The court also found that the statement was a "comment on an ongoing court battle" and would likely be construed as such by the average reader of the trade publication in which the press release appeared.[53] Furthermore, the court noted that, in a broader context, spirited

debate is anticipated whether disputes are over labor or an ongoing court battle. The court added that the statement was a "defensive salvo" and that Karp's new company was free to take part in this spirited debate.[54] Finally, the court said that the "statement in question could never be proven right or wrong, much less 'true' or 'false,'" and thus constituted non-actionable opinion.[55]

In another case in which constitutional protection was afforded to opinionated statements, King v. Globe Newspaper Company,[56] a mock press release was published by the Boston Globe newspaper under the byline of an opinion columnist employed by the newspaper. The satirical column contained a mock press release allegedly written by the governor of Massachusetts which discussed the governor's problems with his press secretary and with the press and which named the governor as his own press secretary.

The court ruled that the contents of the column, which appeared on the newspaper's Op-Ed page and which were written by the newspaper's political columnist, were pure opinion and entitled to constitutional protection. In reaching its decision, the court said that the ordinary reader would notice that the column appears under the title of the author's feature column and under the author's byline, "both of which suggest that the 'press release' was not actually a press release, as that term is commonly understood."[57] In addition, the court said that the opening two words of the column--"Good riddance"--would disabuse any lingering tendency to read the column literally upon encountering the contents of the "press release" as it develops; furthermore, the court said that even though the author writes politics rather than humor, the "tongue-in-

cheek and sometimes droll quality . . . emerging from the language, format, and tone . . . clearly serves to express opinion." [58]

Finally, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, in Information Control v. Genesis One Computer Corp.,[59] ruled that a Genesis Corporation public relations press release constituted constitutionally protected statement of opinion. The press release at issue dealt with a transaction between Genesis One Computer Corporation and Information Control Corporation (ICC). In its press release, Genesis characterized ICC's breach of contract action as a "device" to avoid payment of commissions due Genesis.

While the case was decided four years prior to the Ollman decision, it is important to note that an Ollman-type factor was utilized by the court in reaching its decision. In language that is very close to the "totality of circumstances" test enunciated in Ollman, the court said that the key to determining whether the allegedly defamatory statement constituted fact or opinion requires that the court "examine the statement in its totality in the context it was uttered or published."[60] The court also said that it "must consider all the words used, not merely a particular phrase or sentence,"[61] and that, in addition, "the court must give weight to cautionary terms used by the person publishing the statement."[62]

Finally, the court said claimants "must consider all of the circumstances surrounding the statement, including the medium by which the statement is disseminated and the audience to which it is published."[63] In this regard, the court noted that a factor to be considered in determining whether an opinionated statement is privileged is whether it is "made in public debate, heated labor

dispute, or other circumstances in which an audience may anticipate efforts by the parties to persuade others to their positions by use of epithets, fiery rhetoric or hyperbole . . ."[64]

Public relations practitioners should expect the Ollman four-factor test to play a key role in future cases involving press releases where allegedly libelous statements are disputed. For example, in three cases involving rulings extending constitutionally protected opinion in a news magazine, in statements on an editorial page, and for comments in an opinion column, even though the strongest endorsement was given to utilization of text, the Ollman four-factor test was heavily relied upon in making the crucial fact-opinion distinction.

In one of those rulings favorable to the news media, Janklow v. Newsweek,[65] the U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, ruled as constitutionally protected statements of opinion an allegedly defamatory statement, which, in relating details of an alleged "feud" between the governor of South Dakota and an Indian activist, was imprecise and unverifiable, was presented in a forum where spirited writing should have been expected, and involved criticism of a public official's motives and intentions.

The Janklow case expanded upon the four factors enunciated in Ollman and also endorsed them. In expanding upon them, the court first said that the Ollman factors "must be considered together, that no solitary criterion can be dispositive, and that ultimately the decision whether a statement is fact or opinion must be based on all the circumstances involved.[66] The court "must consider what we will call the 'public context' in which the statement was made."[67]

The court noted that "here we have criticism of the conduct of a state attorney general who now serves as governor, as well as questions about the actions of three other governors . . . all involving an issue of national importance, the treatment of Indian people."[68] Thus, the court concluded that few other discussions of public concern could make a greater claim for First Amendment protection.

Easily one of the strongest endorsements of the Ollman four-factor test came in another 1986 case, El Paso Times v. Kerr,[69] in which the court granted protection to a statement published in an article that appeared on an editorial page. That statement, which, in discussing a government attorney's conduct during a criminal trial, said that "the burden to prove guilt is not an excuse for cheating."[70] The court examined the "full context" of the publication in reaching its decision and asserted that the Ollman court has "utilized a logical and workable four-factor test."[71]

Finally, the Ohio Supreme Court recently reversed a decision that ruled statements in a sports column about litigation to lift athletic sanctions imposed against a high school wrestling coach and team were libelous.[72] Initially, in Milkovich v. News-Herald, the court asserted that the coach and a school superintendent were neither public figures nor public officials, that the statements were factual assertions that implied perjury, and that nothing "precautions the reader that the author's statements are merely his considered opinions."[73] In reversing Milkovich, the Ohio Supreme Court in Scott v. News-Herald[74] examined the Ollman factors with respect to the former decision and came up with a new name for the Ollman four-factor test--"a totality of circumstances test."

In a decision that runs about 20 pages and contains the opinions of seven judges, the court said a "totality of circumstances test" must be used as a compass to show the general direction of published statements and not as a map of rigid boundaries.[75] It said all of the Ollman factors had to be examined in consort with each other rather than simply focusing on one or two of the factors. In addition, the court ruled that opinion expressed in certain formats--columns, cartoons, editorials and "havens for cajoling, invective and hyperbole"--should be given extra protection, because it is speech that matters.[76] As mentioned earlier, however, the "totality of circumstances test" may not last very long, because the the U. S. Supreme Court has agreed to examine Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.

Discussion

An examination of recent cases involving press releases and libel challenges indicates that courts have devised a variety of ways, including use of the guidelines set out by the Ollman four-factor test, to distinguish fact from opinion. In the absence of a controlling U.S. Supreme Court decision, Ollman's four-factor test provides guidance for public relations practitioners to follow when making fact-opinion distinctions in their press releases.

Although Ollman consolidates the factors to be used in making fact-opinion distinctions, courts have frequently drawn upon some, but not all, of the factors. What results is often a less-than-comprehensive test and a less-than-searching analysis of the fact-opinion distinction. With the fact-opinion distinction left to the vagaries of lower courts, public relations practitioners may face

some degree of risk when they "comment" in press releases; however, recent decisions ranging from broadcast commentary to opinion columns on newspaper Op-Ed pages suggest that news releases authored by public relations practitioners are probably relatively "libelproof."

Still, criticism of the Ollman four-factor test has come from majority opinions which acknowledge the difficulty in formulating a "bright-line" test,[77] dissenting opinions which question the lack of specific guidance in the Ollman test,[78] and law review articles.[79] One law review article, for example, suggests that approaches courts have taken in making the distinction vary greatly, ranging from judgment calls to careful examination of the "totality of circumstances" surrounding the publication.[80]

One judge in Benjamin v. Cowles Publishing,[81] a case involving disputed statements in an opinion column, criticized one Ollman factor, warning that readers may not read a statement in context since readers may not scrutinize every word or read the entire article. Other criticisms of the Ollman four-factor test have come in dissents in Janklow in which it was noted that the "tawdry tactics of judicial semantics" do not yield predictability and that the definition of opinion is "extremely broad and elastic,"[82] by dissenters in Scott who said the Ollman test is "unreliable, patently arbitrary, vapid, and meaningless,"[83] "malleable and spongy,"[84] and that "all the four factors amount to no more than a geyser spouting judicial steam, fog, and mist."[85] Finally, a dissenter in Scott has said that the "fourth factor" really adds nothing to the other factors. . . and submerges further into the morass of a Serbonian bog those

seeking to distinguish a statement of fact from one of opinion in any future case."[86]

Despite the criticism, the cases involving news releases, as well as other cases cited, do provide some guidelines that public relations practitioners can follow to maximize the likelihood that their work will be perceived as opinion rather than fact and thus have a greater chance of being afforded constitutional protection. Perhaps the key is that public relations practitioners should disclose the facts upon which their opinions are based. If facts are not available, practitioners should determine how vague and imprecise statements are. Loosely definable, unverifiable and variously interpretable statements have been given protection.[87]

Practioners may also enhance their chances of avoiding libel challenges by using rhetorical hyperbole, tongue-in-cheek statements, and writing with a droll quality.[88] Furthermore, cautionary language--in headlines, titles, and text--seems to help in identifying statements as opinion.

In El Paso, for example, the headline "Federal System Less Than Just" contained opinion and informed readers that the content of the article included opinion. The judicious use of such terms as "seems, appears, and apparently" plus liberal use of quotation marks around potentially damaging assertions can provide protection for opinionated statements in news releases. Such phrases as "In My Opinion," "I think" and "We feel" can be helpful, too.

An excellent rule of thumb for public relations practitioners who are in doubt about what statements constitute opinion is to use

as many precautionary measures as possible and to apply the four factors from Ollman to their writing:

(l)Carefully study the meaning of the language used. Take extra care with and perhaps even eschew indefinite and ambiguous statements. Make sure that statements are expressed in such a way that readers will be able to arrive at a consensus of meaning regarding such statements. The consensus should, of course, be in the desired direction;

(2)Be able to verify whether statements are capable of proof or disproof. Be sure statements are either verifiable in the desired direction and provide the facts upon which opinions are based or be sure that statments are completely unverifiable and so are clearly opinion;

(3)Review the context of the language surrounding the expressions of opinion. The whole must convey meaning in the desired direction or be sure to employ a variety of cautionary language;

(4)Analyze the broader social context surrounding the communication to determine whether use of the statement is likely to be construed as opinion by listeners, viewers, or readers. The subject matter, placement, emphasis, timing and channel of communication for statements should be such that audience members can reasonably expect to find robust debate peppered with expressions of opinion in such treatments.

A final caution: The Ollman four-factor test currently remains the most likely guide for lower courts to follow in making the troublesome fact-opinion distinction, but the "shelf-life" of the four-factor test may

be shortened if the U. S. Supreme Court issues a "bright-line" rule to distinguish fact from opinion in connection with its ruling in Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co. Even though the case deals with a newspaper, an unfavorable ruling would clearly threaten what is now the relatively unfettered right to comment and criticize not only in newspaper editorials, opinion columns and political cartoons, but also in television station editorials and public relations news releases.

NOTES

1. F. Walsh, Public Relations & the Law, (New York: Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, Inc., 1989), pp. 84-86.

2. Parks v. Steinbrenner, 12 Media L. Rptr. 2199 (N.Y. S.Ct. 1986); Parks v. Steinbrenner, 14 Media L. Rptr 1375 S.Ct. App. Div. 1987); Karp v. Hill and Knowlton, 12 Media L. Rptr. 2092 (D. C. N.Y. 1986); King v. Globe Newspaper Company, 12 Media L. Rptr. 2361 (Mass. S.C. 1986); Information Control v. Genesis One Computer Corp., 611 F.2d 781 (1980).

3. "Supreme Court accepts libel case," Presstime, (February, 1990), p. 38; See also, Milkovich v. News-Herald, 11 Media L. Rptr. 1598 (Ohio 1984); and Scott v.

News-Herald, 13 Media L. Rptr. 1241 (Ohio 1986).

4. D. Sneed and H. Stonecipher, "Libel and the OpinionWriter: The Fact-Opinion Distinction," Journalism Quarterly, Summer-Autumn 1987, p. 491-499; D. Sneed and H. Stonecipher, Constitution Provides Limited Libel Protection to Broadcast Commentators," Communications and the Law, April 1988, p. 19-30.

5. New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 376 U.S.254, 279-80 (1964).

6. M. Newell, THE LAW OF DEFAMATION, LIBEL AND SLANDER sec. 1 (1890). See also, Note, The Fact-Opinion Distinction in First Amendment Libel Law: The Need for a Bright-Line Rule, 72 GEORGETOWN L.J. 1817, 1819 (August 1984).

7. RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS sec. 566, Comment a (1977) hereinafter cited as RESTATEMENT.

8. RESTATEMENT OF TORTS sec. 606, Comment c and d (1938).

9. RESTATEMENT sec. 566, Comment b.

10. Veeder, Freedom of Public Discussion, HARV. L. REV. 413, 419 (1910). See also, Note, The Fact-Opinion Distinction, supra, note 6, at 1819-20.

11. See generally, Titus, Statement of Fact Versus Statements of Opinion--A Spurious Dispute in Fair Comment, 15 VAND. L. REV. 1203, 1221 (1962). See also, W. Prosser, HANDBOOK OF THE LAW OF TORTS 820 (4th ed. 1971).

12. 376 U.S. at 279-80.

13. 418 U.S. 323 (1974).

14. Ibid. at 339-40. See also, RESTATEMENT sec. 566, Comment c.

15. See, e.g., Note, The Fact-Opinion Distinction, supra note 6.

16. See e.g., Note, The Fact-Opinion Distinction, supra note 6, at 1821.

17. D. Gillmore & J. Barron, MASS COMMUNICATION LAW 266 (4th ed. 1984).

18. Sack, LIBEL, SLANDER, AND RELATED PROBLEMS 154 (1980).

19. RESTATEMENT sec. 566, Comment c.

20. Dunne & Bradstreet, Inc. v. Greenmoss Builders, Inc. 53 U.S.L.W. 4866 (June 26, 1985).

21. RESTATEMENT sec. 566, Comment c.

22. Note, The Fact-Opinion Distinction, supra note 6, at 1822.

23. Ibid. at 1824, citing Ollman v. Evans, 713 F2d at 844 (Robinson, C.J., concurring).

24. Greenbelt Cooperative Publishing Ass'n. v. Bresler, 398 U.S. 6 (1970); Old Dominion Branch No. 496, National Ass'n of Letter Carriers v. Austin, 418 U.S. 264 (1974).

25. Eight of the twelve circuits had accepted the Gertz statement as controlling in reported cases through December 6, 1984. See Ollman v. Evans, 750 F2d at 974 n.6.

26. The fourth annual fifty state survey of libel and privacy law, which covered all developments through 1984, reported new cases in nine jurisdictions in 1984 alone. The survey also indicated that 12 other states continue to utilize the common law doctrine under the rubric of either "fair comment" or "public interest involving public figures." See, Issue Status Summary LDRC 50-STATE SURVEY 767-70 (Libel Defense Resource Center, New York, 1984).

27. 750 F.2nd 970, 11 Media L. Rptr. 1433 9D.C. Cir. 1984).

28. 750 F2d at 975.

29. Ibid. at 970.

30. 105 S.Ct. 2662.

31. 750 F.2d at 972.

32. Ibid. at 972.

33. Ibid. at 977-78.

34. Ibid. at 979.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid. at 981.

37. Ibid. at 979.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid. at 980.

40. Ibid. at 989.

41. Ibid. at 989-90.

42. Ibid. at 987.

43. Parks v. Steinbrenner, 12 Media L. Rptr. 2199 (N.Y.S.Ct. 1986).

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid. at 2200.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MASS MEDIA: HOW PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELDS IN MIAMI AND NEW YORK VIEW PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFECTS ON MASS MEDIA, THEMSELVES, AND EACH OTHER

A STUDENT PAPER

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ABSTRACT

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MASS MEDIA: HOW PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELDS IN MIAMI AND NEW YORK VIEW PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFECTS ON MASS MEDIA, THEMSELVES, AND EACH OTHER.

Public relations practitioners and journalists in South Florida and metropolitan New York were surveyed regarding their attitudes about the inter-relationships between the two groups. Journalists attributed a high degree of conflict between the two groups as a product of public relations practitioners' poor performance. Practitioners attributed the conflict to journalists' inflated views of the status of journalism compared with public relations. There were no significant differences in attitudes between the two groups in the two geographic areas.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The paper is based upon the author's unpublished master's thesis of the same title completed during her M.A. program at the School of Communication, University of Miami, Miami, Florida, in Spring 1990. The author is indebted to the thesis committee: in particular Thomas A. Steinfatt, Ph.D., committee chairman, and professor of speech communication; and Michael B. Salwen, Ph.D., assistant professor of journalism, both of UM's School of Communication; and David G. Cartano, Ph.D., associate professor of sociology. The author also wishes to acknowledge Dean Edward J. Pfister and Assistant Dean John Masterson at UM's School of Communication for their assistance.

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For a "profession" preoccupied with positive image-making for others, public relations and its practitioners suffer from a poor public image themselves (Bishop, 1988; Charron, 1989; Cline, 1982; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Jeffers, 1977; Nicolai & Riley, 1972; Poorman, 1974; Sanoff, 1979; Simon, 1986; Turk, 1986; Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1986). Improving the status of public relations is one of the biggest challenges facing practitioners in the 1990s, according to a recent poll of public relations executives ("Top '90s challenge," 1989).

Perhaps part of the problem is that the term public relations means so many things to so many. Some confuse public relations with sales promotion or advertising. Others call such activities as telemarketing and party planning "public relations." Professionals who practice public relations and the chief executive officers they serve eventually come to realize that public relations is a more sophisticated, integrated process involving research, strategic planning, persuasive communication and counseling of management. Some go so far as to suggest that public relations practitioners are "applied social and behavorial scientists" (Robinson, 1966, p. 7).

One of the most visible functions of public relations is to manage press coverage or publicity on behalf of the

practitioner's client or organization. It is perhaps the only responsibility that in any conceivable circumstance unquestionably falls into the domain of public relations. This management of publicity involves garnering "good press" in the news-editorial columns/segments of the mass media.

Yet, journalists in particular have long vilified public relations practitioners. The climate of antagonism between journalists and public relations practitioners has been fairly well established (Bishop, 1988; Gieber, 1960; Jeffers, 1977; Nicolai & Riley, 1972; Rivers & Schramm, 1969; Ryan & Martinson, 1984; Schabacker, 1963; Turk, 1986). Some may argue that the traditional animosity may be dissipating somewhat (L. A. Grunig, personal communication, September 29, 1989).

But only one study (Grunig, 1987) seems to support the proposition. It focused on how public relations practitioners communicate with a variety of constituencies, such as clients, customers, stockholders, suppiers, competitors and mass media. Practitioners who participated in the Grunig study ranked their relationships with the media more autonomous and cooperative than any other constituency, including government, the community, and clients/customers. Unlike many of the other studies in this area, Grunig did not measure public relations practitioners' views of the traditionally accepted hostile relationship between practitioners and journalists. Nor did she measure

journalists' attitudes towards public relations and its practitioners.

The differences in findings between Grunig's study and its many predecessors may be largely due to the obvious research design differences. Another explanation for Grunig's comparatively optimistic findings might be that study respondents were all based in metropolitan Washington, D.C. In a geographic growth area for public relations such as Washington, D.C., perhaps public relations is generally viewed in a more favorable light than in other geographic areas (L. L. Kopenhaver, personal communication, September 29, 1989).

Gatekeepers of the News

News events come to the attention of the press in primarily two ways. In the traditional model, the source is sought out by the journalist. In the public relations model, the source seeks out the journalist. In either model, the journalist in turn decides to "tell" the community of the event. The two communicators -- the source and the reporter -- each act as gatekeepers in the channel of news; they both make decisions controlling the news flow to the community. Each of these gate areas can be viewed as having a separate frame of reference with its own bureaucratic structure (Gieber, 1960).

Journalists are likely to hold strong opinions about

public relations practitioners because the two groups frequently interact. Journalists have traditionally perceived public relations practitioners as attempting to "sell" the journalist on a story idea that will benefit the practitioner's client or organization (Turk, 1986).

Journalists resent practitioners' apparent vested interests. And journalists' irritation is understandable when they are flooded with poorly written news releases on subjects that they believe "couldn't possibly interest anyone" but the company paying to have them written (Cutlip et al., 1985, p. 429). But public relations practitioners, like any other news source (Dimmick, 1974), need journalists to "validate" their events as news. In fact the success of what Boorstin (1964) calls pseudo-events is measured by how widely they are reported.

Accurancy and Fairness in the Press: Who Is Responsible?

Sometimes journalists are held captive by practitioners, who not only control access to the newsmakers, but may actually create and control the news. Sometimes practitioners suffer divided loyalties between media "pounding them for not telling everything they know" and management pounding them "for telling too much" (Saunders, 1989, p. 24).

Ultimately, then, a great deal of news media content is the result of this joint, mutually dependent relationship

where practitioner and journalist sometimes act as adversaries and sometimes as colleagues cooperating in respective self-interest (Cutlip et al., 1985). Accuracy and fairness in the press, then, cannot be viewed as the sole result, or responsibility, of the reporter.

The Extent of Public Relations Influence on the News

Estimates of the effects of public relations on news-editorial content of mass media vary widely. Cutlip et al. (1985), authors of the public relations text used most by educators as well as practitioners, state that "40 percent or more" of news content is initiated by public relations sources. Rivers and Schramm (1969) describe the percentage of material used by the media either inspired or supplied by public relations practitioners as "dismaying."

Turk (1986) points out that the news media are "major sources of the information which is the raw material of public opinion." She adds that "news is not necessarily what happens but what a news source says has happened, because news doesn't 'happen' until there is an exchange of information between newsmen (sic) and their sources" (Turk, 1986, pp. 1-3). The theoretical movement towards "stronger effects" mass media models suggests we ought to be concerned about the quantity and quality of effects of public relations on mass media because of potentionally powerful impacts of public relations on public opinion formation

through the mass media.

Consonance in Mass Media

Noelle-Neumann (1973, 1974, 1979) suggests that mass media news conditions of consonance, cumulation, and ubiquity, may have powerful effects on expression of opinion in public in a "spiral of silence." Consonance is when different -- even competing -- media can be said to speak with one voice, in column inches or air time, resulting in similar, intensive, comprehensive, repetitious, publicity of the same news in multiple media. Cumulation is when the consonance occurs in multiple media. Ubiquity is when the consonance is so cumulative is seems to be everywhere (Noelle-Neumann and Mathes, 1987, pp. 406-409).

The news coverage that results from these conditions was recently described by Ted Koppel in an ABC News Nightline broadcast as "pack journalism, horde copy" ("Pack Journalism," 1989). Koppel was referring to the vast number of news media that followed a "Pied Piper" and carried similar coverage on widely disseminated stories specifically about the former Panamanian leader Manuel Noreiga as U.S. public enemy number one or the recent American flag-burning controversy. Koppel asked, "Who sets the agenda for the American news media? Is it really a matter of independent news judgement, or skillful manipulation by the White House and others?" It seems likely that public relations

practitioners are among the manipulators who construct, sometimes artificially, the news media's agenda. It seems equally likely that the public is affected by this seemingly real consensus of news coverage.

A question lingers: what role does public relations play in creating the condition, and effect, of consonance as well as cumulation and ubiquity? Turk (1986) asks "who sets the media's agenda?" and answers, to a large degree, public relations practitioners. Sandman, Rubin, and Sachsman (1976, p. 266) go so far as to suggest that "issues that get poor coverage are the issues with unskilled or no public relations."

If public relations is accepted as affecting news media, and the news media are accepted as affecting public opinion and behavior, then other fundamental questions emerge, such as -- what effects does public relations have on public opinion formation? If Lippmann (1965) is correct about the "pictures in our heads" serving as mankind's interpretation of reality, how many of those pictures are put there by public relations?

A Need for Empirical Research

Definitive empirical studies have yet to be conducted to establish quantitatively the effects of public relations on news content using content analysis methodology without benefit of prior knowledge of the subsidizing organization.

Then all influences on the content of mass media must be identified, tracked and accounted for. In describing the extent to which news-editorial content is influenced by public relations sources, public relations practitioners, researchers and educators cite a variety of statistics, mostly based on opinions and/or experiences, seldom on empirical evidence.

One exception is what Schabacker (1963) called a pilot analysis of the news content of Minneapolis media. He found that public relations served as a news source for 24 to 51% of all news-editorial content in the newspapers analyzed, 12 to 13% of television news content, 10 to 16% for radio and 10 to 12% of wire service dispatches. Limited to examining only the content of five media over a one-week period, the tabulation and analysis was nevertheless expensive, "sizable and time-consuming" and the author projected that future studies of its kind would require substantial funding for the personnel resources alone that would be required (Schabacker, 1963, pp. 165-175).

To measure the incidence with any useful predictive value, obviously the content analyses of specified media would have to be of sufficient quantity over a period of time that would adequately accommodate the natural vagaries of news. Taking up the challenge of quantifying the extent of the incidence of the effects of public relations on news content by replicating Schabacker's methodology becomes

daunting indeed -- and Schabacker is assuming that public relations as a source or influence is readily identifiable, through such flags as attributions to "spokespersons."

Fishman (1980) presents an even greater dilemma in raising the question of invisible effects of public relations. For example, a public relations consultant may advise a mayor or police chief to order a crackdown on illicit drugs, precisely for the purpose of demonstrating to the public that something is being done to solve the problem. Such a move may generate considerable news coverage. Yet the public relations practitioner and the influence public relations wielded in this instance may never be directly linked to the resulting publicity, although a cause-and-effect relationship clearly exists.

Questioning effects of professional attitudes

Underlying the persistent questions regarding the effects of public relations on mass media and, ultimately, public opinion, are the inter-relationships between the professional news gatherers/gatekeepers and public relations practitioners, their self-perceptions and their attitudes towards each other.

Indicative of long-held attitude disparities are Feldman's (1961a, 1961b) benchmark reports in The Quill and Editor & Publisher of journalists and public relations practitioners' responses to a series of positive and

negative descriptions of public relations.

Nayman's (1973) survey of the literature regarding professionalism in journalistic occupations, charts a trend towards increasingly professional behavior along four criteria: expertise, autonomy, commitment and responsibility. Jeffers (1977) investigated what he called the "apparent bi-level nature of status and perceptions of cooperation in the journalist/practitioner relationship" and found that in terms of skills and ethics, compared with practitioners, journalists have higher expectations for their own occupation. Practitioners rated themselves equal in status to journalists in general but lower in status than specific journalists with whom they have regular contact. Practitioners also viewed the relationship as much more cooperative than did journalists.

A study of 74 Texas professionals (Aronoff, 1975) reported that journalists expressed news values opposite of those expressed by public relations practitioners. News values ranked included factual accuracy, interest to readers and completeness, among others. Journalists studied also rated PR contacts low in source credibility, and generally held PR practitioners in low occupational esteem.

Journalists Harbor Negative Views about Public Relations

A study of 104 Florida professionals (Kopenhaver, Martinson, & Ryan, 1984) reported that journalists viewed

public relations in a significantly less favorable light than did PR practitioners. The Florida study reinforced the findings of Aronoff and Jeffers with regard to status and news values. Once again, the two groups held largely opposing views in their perceptions of public relations' status and each other's news values.

Journalists claimed a higher status than practitioners; practitioners perceived equal status and identified with a partnership role, from the item "Public relations and the press are partners in the dissemination of information" (Kopenhaver et al., 1984, p. 862). Practitioners' ranking of news values was fairly aligned with journalists; and practitioners were fairly accurate in projecting journalists' rankings. Conversely, journalists' projections of practitioners' rankings were off the mark. For example, journalists projected practitioners' ratings of the value "depicts subjects in favorable light" as most important to practitioners when in fact it was least (Kopenhaver, 1985). This response on the part of journalists is a further indication that journalists believe public relations practitioners are primarily interested in manipulating journalists so practitioners succeed in "getting ink" for their clients.

Education Plays a Role

Some of the journalists' negative attitudes may stem

from the educational process. A followup study (Habermann, Kopenhaver, & Martinson, 1988) of university faculty in news-editorial and public relations sequences found the news-editorial faculty held even more negative attitudes towards public relations than their professional counterparts. Biases against public relations exist in textbooks used in many media courses (Cline, 1982).

Pragmatically, the more useful the PR practitioner is to the journalist as a news source, the more favorably the journalist may view the PR practitioner (Gans, 1979). Money apparently possesses the ability to transform journalists' negative attitudes. A study of 274 Colorado professionals (Nayman, McKee, & Lattimore, 1977) supported earlier findings that public relations practitioners are generally better paid than journalists. "If the incentives were great enough," more than half of the journalist responding to the survey said they would enter public relations.

Still, public relations practitioners may be their own worst enemies. Some evidence suggests journalists' negative attitudes derive partly from negative experiences with inept or unprofessional practitioners; their inability to educate journalists about public relations; and their failure to fill the journalists' need for clear, concise, accurate information. Also working against them are findings that journalists harbor inflated views of their own status; a shared belief that their work is more important to society

than public relations; and unfair, but widely accepted, "pack-type" professional biases against public relations (Ryan & Martinson, 1988).

The conflict between journalists and practitioners could become more pervasive if the "pay for play" concept of public relations gains favor. Most public relations firms bill for their professional services in advance, or "on the clock" for services provided. But at least one firm with offices in several U.S. cities is charging its clients for publicity after the placements have been broadcast or printed. The company might bill a client $45,000 for an appearance on "60 Minutes," $16,000 for an interview in USA Today, $1,000 for a mention in the Wall Street Journal. In her column in the Dallas Times Herald, Randolph (1989) reported, "...the realization that a big fee turns on my news judgment gives me the creeps. If I knew the (public relations) person on the phone would earn his company $8,800 if I agreed to do a feature about his client in the Washington Post, I'd be tempted to pass the receiver to my bad ear."

Purpose of This Study/Research Questions

Evidence exists that public relations does influence the content of mass media, at least to some extent. Some research questions which arise are what do journalists' and practitioners' perceive regarding the extent of the impact

of public relations on news content? How do journalists currently view public relations practitioners? Have those views changed from previous attitude studies? How do public relations practitioners believe they are viewed by journalists and how do those perceptions affect them, if they do at all? And how do public relations practitioners -- charged with promoting goodwill and understanding between their institutions and those institutions' publics, including journalists -- cope with journalists' persistently negative attitudes, perhaps signaling interpersonal communication failure on the practitioner's part?

A Softening of Attitudes?

Is there a softening of the traditional negative attitudes -- at least in geographic growth markets for public relations? Like Washington, D.C., a growth market for public relations is Dade County, Florida, reflected by increasing numbers of professional yellow-page telephone book listings in Miami. Other markets, such as metropolitan New York, have remained relatively stable in numbers of practitioners, as evidenced by proportional numbers of local delegates to national PRSA conferences.

Do attitudes of journalists and public relations practitioners toward themselves and each other differ between a geographic area experiencing a growth boom in

public relations, such as Dade County, Florida, compared with an area that has been more stagnant, such as metropolitan New York?

Methods

The research involved direct mail surveys during January 1990, to 400 professionals, half of them public relations practitioners, 100 working in South Florida and 100 in New York. The other half were journalists, 100 working in South Florida and 100 in New York. The 100 public relations practitioners in South Florida were randomly selected from the roster of 128 members of the Miami Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The 100 practitioners in metropolitan New York were randomly selected from the 760 members listed in the New York section of the 1989-90 PRSA membership directory. Members of PRSA were selected as being representative of public relations practitioners because almost all are employed as public relations practitioners for a company, organization or public relations agency.

The 200 journalists surveyed were all members of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), half randomly selected from the Greater Miami chapter roster of 134 members, the other half randomly selected from the metropolitan New York chapter roster of 495 members.

Members of SPJ were selected as being representative of journalists because the majority are working journalists, although a minority of members are public relations practitioners, reflecting the historical cross-over from journalism into public relations.

Materials: Construction of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument included 40 items, 17 verbatim and 23 with minor language variations to eliminate sexist phrasing, such as substituting "journalist" for "newsman." The items were used in previous surveys (Aronoff, 1975; Feldman, 1961a, 1961b; Habermann et al., 1988; Jeffers, 1977; Kopenhaver, 1985; Kopenhaver et al., 1984; Ryan & Martinson, 1988) indentified in the literature as those studying journalists and public relations professionals' attitudes toward each other. Ten original items were added as logical progressions to items included from the previous studies.

The same questionnaire was used for both journalists and public relations practitioners. Sections I and III of the questionnaire included 31 statements with 7-point Likert-type strongly agree-strongly disagree scales. The direction of the response scales was randomly switched from strongly agree on the left to strongly agree on the right throughout the instrument to avoid a response set. End anchor points were graphically differentiated by the use of

geometric symbols which were consistently assigned throughout the instrument to visually aid the respondent in recognizing the direction of the scales.

In addition, Section II of the questionnaire included eight news values to be rank-ordered twice, once expressing personal views, the second ranking for perceptions of how their opposite journalist/practitioner counterparts would rank them.

Pilot Study

A pilot test was administered to 82 undergraduates enrolled in six courses in the University of Miami's School of Communication and analyzed with NCSS (Hintze, 1989).

To measure content validity, the pilot questionnaire was also direct mailed to 24 working journalists, which yielded three responses; and 24 working public relations professionals, yielding ten responses. In addition to completing the pilot questionnaire, the professionals were also asked to evaluate the instrument.

Cover Letters

Cover letters to accompany the pre-test survey questionnaire were prepared with two versions, one for each of the two groups -- journalists and practitioners. The letters were printed on stationery from the "Office of the Dean" of the School of Communication, University of Miami,

and bore the signature of Dean Edward J. Pfister. The letters guaranteed confidentiality of responses. Anonymity was not guaranteed because questionnaires were numbered and tracked for followup purposes.

A second wave of questionnaires, cover letters with revised reminder to respond before January 31, 1990, and postage-paid return envelopes was mailed to non-respondents in mid-January.

Data Analysis

To test H_1, attitudes towards status and perceptions of professional performance are directly linked, a Pearson correlation test was used to compare PR practioners' (group 1) and journalists' (group 2) responses to status and performance variables. Item 3 in Section I of the survey instrument measured status, while items 2, 4 and 9 in Section I were combined to measure perceptions of professional performance.

T-tests compared PR practioners' and journalists' responses to item 3 in Section I to compare attitudes about status (H_2, public relations practitioners believe the status of public relations is equal to journalism) and items 2, 4 and 9 in Section I of the survey instrument to compare perceptions of professional performance (H_3, public relations practitioners believe that the performance of PR practitioners is better than journalists believe it is).

Spearman's rho was used to evaluate H_4 public relations practitioners and journalists more often than not share similar news values, and H_5 journalists will see their news values as different than PR practitioners' news values. Journalists' and practitioners' responses to the rank-ordered news value variables in Section II were compared in several different combinations.

T-tests compared responses from the two groups -- journalists and practitioners -- to measure the hypotheses as follows:

H_6 the dissemination of news to the general public is partially a product of the inter-dependency of public relations practitioners and journalists: Section I, items 1, 6 and 12;

H_8 journalists are more likely than PR practitioners to assign cause of the antagonism between the two groups to poor professional performance on the part of practitioners: Section III, item 12;

H_9 practitioners are more likely than journalists to assign the cause of conflict between the two groups to journalists' inflated views of their own status or negative views of practitioners' status: Section I, item 14 and Section III, item 9;

H_{10} practitioners are more likely to believe public relations has a stronger impact on news content and how news is presented than journalists: Section IV, items 1, 3, 4, 5;

and to test H_7 (the conflict between public relations practitioners and journalists exists because of differences in perceptions regarding performance and status), a multiple regression was used on two new variables, one consisting of Section I, items 7 and 8; the other of Section I, item 12 and Section III, item 4, along with Section I, item 3.

H_{11} there is less antagonism between practitioners and journalists in a geographic growth area for public relations, such as South Florida, than in a more stagnant area, such as metropolitan New York was tested by analysis of variance on item 12 in Section I and item 4 in Section III.

T-tests were also used on individual variables. Cross-tabulations and descriptive statistics were used for demographic variables. To test for reliability, Chronbach's coefficient alpha was computed. An alpha percentage (Steinfatt, 1979) was computed to provide an experimentwise protection level across the set of tests in Phase I. All of the afore-mentioned data analysis utilized NCSS (Hintze, 1989).

Results:

Of the 400 questionnaires mailed, 217 responses -- representing a response rate of 54.25% -- were analyzed. Fourteen (16.5%) of the total 85 respondents from the SPJ chapters in New York and Miami who returned surveys

indicated they are currently employed in public relations. These cases were eliminated from data analysis since we wanted two clear divisions: journalists practicing journalism and public relations practitioners practicing public relations.

Representative Professional Affiliations

There were 53 (26%, N = 203) responses from New York public relations practitioners, including associates of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The College Board, Equitable Financial Companies, American National Red Cross, Hill and Knowlton, Ogilvy & Mather, Credit Suisse, New York Telephone, United Negro College Fund, McGraw Hill Information Services, W.R. Grace & Co., Shell Oil Company, NYNEX Information Resources Co., Boy's Clubs of America, Carl Byoir and Associates and the Salvation Army.

Sixty-six (32.5%) South Florida public relations practitioners responded from Doral Resorts, Hispanic Heritage Council, Wackenhut Corporation, United Way of Dade County, Ryder Systems, American Lung Association, WSVN-Ch. 7 TV, University of Miami Jackson Medical Center, Broward County Public Schools, Florida Power & Light, Historical Museum of South Florida, New World Symphony, the Graham Companies, Hyatt Hotels, and several financial insitutions, hospitals and counseling firms.

Thirty-five (17%) New York-area journalists responded,

with affiliations such as Associated Press, Business Week, NBC News, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Conde-Nast Traveler, Woman's Day Magazine, Westinghouse Broadcasting, Travel Weekly, Barron's, Fairchild Publications, CBS News, Reuters and others.

Fifty (25%) South Florida journalists responded, with affiliations such as Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Miami Herald, Diario las Americas, WINZ News Radio, Miami Today, WPLG-Ch. 10 TV, WCIX-Ch. 6 TV, WLTV-Ch. 23, Palm Beach Post and others.

Most Journalists Would Not Work in PR

Of the New York journalists, 14 (48%, N = 29) would never consider working in public relations, about the same number (12, 41%) who would work in PR for considerations in addition to salary, while 3 (10%) would take a PR job for a $10,000 increase in salary. In Miami, 20 (44%, N = 45) would work in PR for considerations in addition to salary, 17 (38%) would never consider working in public relations, and 4 (8%) would take a PR job for a $10,000 increase in salary. Only in Miami would journalists move into PR for as little as $7,500 or $5,000 (2 or 4% each). No journalist would make the transition for an increase of only $2,000.

Results of Hypotheses Testings

H_1 states that attitudes towards status and perceptions of professional performance are directly linked. When status and perceptions of professional performance are measured together, there is no significant difference in the attitudes between journalists and public relations practitioners (r = .28, NSD p<.05). Likewise, there is no significant difference in attitudes between the two groups regarding performance alone (r = .42, NSD p<.05). However, there is a significant difference in attitudes between the two groups regarding status (r = -.07, p<.001).

H_2 predicts that public relations practitioners believe the status of public relations is equal to journalism. Public relations practitioners and journalists perceive the equality of status of public relations relative to journalism very differently (t = 5.95, p<.0001). In considering equality of status, partnership and performance notions, public relations practitioners averaged 5.01 while journalists averaged 3.20, where 7.0 indicates "strongly agree" and 1.0 indicates "strongly disagree" (which is the scale consistent throughout, unless noted otherwise).

H_3 expects that public relations practitioners believe that the performance of PR practitioners is better than journalists believe it is. Public relations practitioners and journalists perceive practitioners' performance very differently (t = 6.684, p<.0001). Practitioners averaged

8.11 while journalists averaged 5.35.

H_4 predicts that public relations practitioners and journalists more often than not share similar news values.

Public relations practitioners perceive journalists' values to be much closer to their own (r_s = .46, p<.05, Table 1.2).

H_5 states that journalists will see their news values as different than PR practitioners' news values.

Journalists perceive practitioners' news values very differently from their own (r_s = -.09, p<.05, Table 1.1). There is little relationship between the news values practitioners report and journalists' perceptions of practitioners' values (r_s = .17, p<.05, Table 1.3). Practioners are slightly more adept at perceiving journalists' news values (r_s = .24, p<.05, Table 1.4), but not significantly so.

Table 1

Values common to tables 1.1-1.4 are:

1 Factual accuracy
2 Interest to readers
3 Usefulness to readers
4 Completeness
5 Prompt, timely publication
6 Depicts subject in favorable light
7 Mechanical/grammatical accuracy
8 Fairness to different views

Table 1.1 (r_s = -.09)

NEWS VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF JOURNALISTS...			...AND JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTITIONERS' VALUES		
Values	Mean	Rank	Values	Mean	Rank
1	1.735	1	1	4.636	5
2	3.410	2	2	3.313	2
3	4.659	5	3	4.500	4
4	4.817	6	4	5.387	6
5	4.190	4	5	3.456	3
6	7.765	8	6	1.889	1
7	5.622	7	7	5.573	7
8	4.134	3	8	7.184	8

Table 1.2 (r_s = .46)

NEWS VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS...			...AND PRACTITIONERS' PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTS' VALUES		
Values	Mean	Rank	Values	Mean	Rank
1	2.161	1	1	2.553	1
2	2.402	2	2	3.217	3
3	4.427	4	3	4.158	4
4	4.789	5	4	5.212	6
5	3.189	3	5	4.602	5
6	7.771	8	6	3.115	2
7	5.618	7	7	5.839	7
8	5.358	6	8	6.688	8

Table 1.3 (r_s = .17)

NEWS VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF JOURNALISTS...			...AND PRACTITIONERS'PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTS' VALUES		
Values	Mean	Rank	Values	Mean	Rank
1	1.735	1	1	2.553	1
2	3.410	2	2	3.217	3
3	4.659	5	3	4.158	4
4	4.817	6	4	5.212	6
5	4.190	4	5	4.602	5
6	7.765	8	6	3.115	2
7	5.622	7	7	5.839	7
8	4.134	3	8	6.688	8

Table 1.4 (r_s = .24)

NEWS VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS...			...AND JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTITIONERS' VALUES		
Values	Mean	Rank	Values	Mean	Rank
1	2.161	1	1	4.636	5
2	2.402	2	2	3.313	2
3	4.427	4	3	4.500	4
4	4.789	5	4	5.387	6
5	3.189	3	5	3.456	3
6	7.771	8	6	1.889	1
7	5.618	7	7	5.573	7
8	5.358	6	8	7.184	8

H_6 suggested that the dissemination of news to the general public is partially a product of the inter-dependency of public relations practitioners and journalists. Public relations practitioners are more likely to believe in the inter-dependencies between themselves and journalists. Journalists are more likely to deny the inter-dependencies.

Public relations practitioners, averaging 4.39, are slightly more likely to admit an interdependency than journalists, averaging 3.55. While the difference (t = 1.72, NSD $p<.09$) approaches significance, it is clearly not significant at the .05 level.

H_7 projected that the conflict between public relations practitioners and journalists exists because of differences in perceptions regarding performance and status.

The differences in perceptions regarding performance appear to be related to conflict between journalists and practitioners (r = .30). However, when status is added as

the second variable, the correlation (r = .3) does not significantly increase the multiple regression (R = .31, NSD $p<.05$). The bivariate r between status and conflict is .18.

H_8 predicted that journalists are more likely to assign cause of the antagonism between the two groups to poor professional performance on the part of practitioners.

Journalists averaged 5.426, while practitioners averaged 4.282, indicating practitioners did not feel their performance was a particular element in the conflict. Journalists believe public relations practitioners are not sufficiently concerned about journalists' professional needs (t = -2.78, $p<.006$). Journalists believe, in part, that practitioners' poor performance causes the conflict.

H_9 predicted that practitioners are more likely to assign the cause to journalists' inflated views of their own status or negative views of practitioners' status.

Practitioners ascribe the conflict to journalists' negative views of the status of practitioners or journalists' inflated views of their own status (t = 3.34, $p<.02$). Practitioners averaged 9.55; journalists, 8.71 (on a scale ranging from 2.0 indicating "strongly disagree" to 14.0 indicating "strongly agree." The test measures two combined items, 7 and 8 from Section I).

H_{10} suggested that practitioners are more likely to believe public relations has a stronger impact on news content and how news is presented, while journalists are

less likely to believe that public relations has an impact on news content.

While practitioners are more inclined to believe public relations has an impact on news content than journalists (t = 1.76, NSD $p<.08$), the difference between the two groups is not significant at the .05 level. Practitioners averaged 12.25; journalists, 11.16 (on a scale ranging from 4.0 indicating "strongly disagree"/"less than 10%" to 22.0 indicating "strongly agree"/"more than 75%." The test measures four items combined, items 1, 3, 4 and 5 from Section IV).

H_{11} predicted there is less antagonism between practitioners and journalists in a geographic growth area for public relations, such as South Florida, than in a more stagnant area, such as metropolitan New York.

In fact, there is very little difference in the perceptions of antagonism between journalists and practitioners in the two geographic areas of South Florida and metropolitan New York (Table 2). The B effect, that there is antagonism between journalists and practitioners, is significant ($F_{1,16}$ = 16.38, $p<.001$). The differences in the A effect, attitudes between professionals in New York and South Florida, and the AB effect interaction, were not significant at the .05 level.

Table 2

	Practitioners	Journalists
New York	-5.70	-7.26
Florida	-5.93	-7.44

When analyzed item by item, additional differences of attitudes between journalists and practitioners are revealed. Table 3 details these findings.

Table 3

SECTION I.

	Pract. mean	Journ. mean	t-value	p
1. Public relations and the press are partners in the dissemination of information.	5.195	3.560	5.789	.001
2. Public relations practitioners frequently insist on promoting products, services and other activities which do not legitimately deserve promotion.	3.946	5.016	-4.357	.001
3. Public relations is an occupation equal in status to journalism.	5.009	3.202	5.950	.001
4. Public relations practitioners have cluttered our channels of communications with pseudo-events and phony phrases that confuse public issues.	3.610	5.274	-6.573	.001
5. Public relations practitioners too often try to deceive the press by attaching too much importance to trivial events that are not newsworthy.	3.560	5.238	-7.406	.001

(Table 3 continued)	Pract. mean	Journ. mean	t-value	p
6. The public relations practitioner serves as an extension of the news media, covering the organization for which he or she is responsible.	5.305	3.286	6.813	.001
7. Public relations practitioners are people of good sense, good will and good moral character.	5.195	4.262	4.935	.001
8. Journalists are people of good sense, good will and good moral character.	4.771	4.940	-.793	.429
9. Public relations practitioners understand such journalistic problems as meeting deadlines, attracting reader interest and making the best use of space.	5.797	5.012	3.672	.001
10. You often can't trust public relations practitioners.	2.881	4.643	-6.966	.001
11. You often can't trust journalists.	3.754	3.807	-.197	.844
12. Journalists and public relations practitioners carry on a running battle.	3.607	4.048	-1.722	.087
13. The massiveness of the impact of public relations makes it harder and harder for the average citizen to know when he is being sold a bill of goods.	3.448	5.530	-8.459	.001
14. Journalists frequently use practices which are not in the public interest.	4.034	3.607	1.595	.112
15. Public relations practitioners frequently use practices which are not in the public interest.	4.060	5.238	-4.962	.001

(Table 3 continued)

SECTION II.	Pract. mean	Journ. mean	t-value	p
Ranking of factors important to journalists:				
Factual accuracy	2.161	1.735	2.080	.039
Interest to readers	2.402	3.410	-4.074	.001
Usefulness to readers	4.427	4.659	-.939	.349
Completeness	4.790	4.817	-.130	.897
Prompt, timely publication	3.189	4.190	-4.110	.001
Depicts subject in favorable light	7.771	7.765	4.242	.967
Mechanical/grammatical accuracy	5.618	5.622	-1.584	.988
Fairness to different views	5.358	4.134	3.574	.001
Ranking of factors important to practitioners:				
Factual accuracy	2.553	4.636	-7.837	.001
Interest to readers	3.218	3.313	-.387	.700
Usefulness to readers	4.158	4.500	-1.384	.169
Completeness	5.212	5.387	-.701	.484
Prompt, timely publication	4.602	3.456	4.172	.001
Depicts subject in favorable light	3.115	1.889	3.828	.001
Mechanical/grammatical accuracy	5.840	5.573	.971	.333
Fairness to different views	6.688	7.184	-1.731	.085
SECTION III.				
1. Public relations practitioners do not need news reporters or the news media to help persuade the public to support issues and programs that are vital to the practitioner's client or organization.	1.697	2.142	-1.967	.049
2. Intentionally or not, when the news media use material supplied by public relations practitioners they are helping the practitioners improve the image of his client or organization.	5.445	5.298	.585	.558
3. Most news reporters/editors and public relations practitioners develop a good working relationship that in the long run is beneficial to both the news media and the public relations practitioner's client or organization.	5.983	5.060	4.735	.001

(Table 3 continued)

SECTION III continued	Pract. mean	Journ. mean	t-value	p
4. The news professional and the public relations practitioner have such fundamentally different goals that it is very difficult for members of the two occupational groups to work together.	2.252	3.321	-4.626	.001
5. Cooperation between news reporters/editors and public relations practitioners is usually detrimental to the public interest.	1.839	2.750	-4.228	.001
6. By and large, news reporters/ editors do not give material provided by public relations practitioners the time and space needed to present the public with a fair picture of the practitioner's client or organization.	3.746	2.702	4.284	.001
7. A general feeling among many journalists that their work is more important to society than public relations, accounts for some of the antagonism journalists feel toward public relations.	5.622	5.667	-.217	.828
8. The antagonism many journalists feel toward public relations stems partly from the inflated view those journalists have of their own status.	4.799	4.179	2.372	.018
9. Many journalists' stereotypes of public relations persons are based on the negative experiences they have had with a few "bad apples."	5.790	5.000	3.566	.001
10. Public relations practitioners must bear part of the responsibility for negative attitudes of many journalists because they have not policed their ranks well enough to eliminate the "bad apples" who give the field a bad name.	5.521	5.321	.864	.388

(Table 3 continued)

Section III continued	Pract. mean	Journ. mean	t-value	p
11. Public relations practitioners must bear part of the responsibility for negative attitudes of many journalists because they haven't done a very good job of educating journalists about public relations.	5.008	4.333	2.696	.008
12. Public relations practitioners are partly responsible for many journalists' negative attitudes toward public relations because they are not sufficiently concerned about the journalist's need for clear, concise, accurate information.	4.282	5.036	-2.781	.006
13. The negative views many journalists express toward public relations are largely justifiable.	3.162	4.536	-5.731	.001
14. Many journalists' negative views of public relations are not justified by the facts.	5.034	3.723	5.625	.001
SECTION IV.				
1. Public relations has a strong impact on what news is presented to the public.	5.000	4.405	2.331	.021
2. Public relations has a strong impact on the way news is presented to the public.	4.308	4.060	.933	.035
3. What percentage of mass media news content do you think is accounted for by public relations?	2.754	2.675	.584	.560
4. What percentage of newspapers' news content do you think is accounted for by public relations?	2.627	2.317	2.389	.018
5. What percentage of television and radio news content do you think is accounted for by public relations?	2.534	2.580	-.305	.761

To test for reliability, Chronbach's coefficient alpha was computed for each of Sections I, III and IV of the questionnaire and again for the entire instrument (Section I r_{tt} = .82; Section III r_{tt} = .40; Section IV r_{tt} = .69; and Sections I, III and IV combined r_{tt} = .79).

To provide an experimentwise protection level across the set of tests in Phase I, an alpha percentage for the .05 level computed at 9.079%; for the .02 level at 4.6% and at the .001 level at 0.26%. Of a total of 69 significance tests, 38 in all were significant at the .05 level or higher. (Two were significant at the .0001 level, 26 at .001, two at .006, one at .008, four at .02, one at .035, and two at .05).

Of the t-tests applied to the 50 individual items, 32 computed at $p<.05$. Twenty-six of the 32 items computed at $p<.01$. T-tests performed on the individual items indicate that:

Practitioners are significantly more likely than journalists to believe they are partners with journalists in the dissemination of news (t = 5.789, $p<.001$). Journalists are significantly more likely than practitioners to believe practitioners insist on promoting products, services and other activities that legitimately do not deserve promotion (t = -4.357, $p<.001$). Journalists are significantly less likely than practitioners to perceive public relations as equal in status to journalists (t = 5.950, $p<.001$).

Journalists are significantly more likely than practitioners to believe that practitioners have cluttered our channels of communications with pseudo-events and phony phrases that confuse public issues (t = -6.573, p<.001). Journalists are significantly more likely than practitioners to believe that practitioners too often try to deceive the press by attaching too much importance to trivial events that are not newsworthy (t = -7.406, p<.001). Public relations practitioners are significantly more likely than journalists to believe practitioners serve as extensions of the news media, covering the organizations for which they are responsible (t = 6.813, p <.001).

Although journalists are slightly more inclined than practitioners to believe journalists possess good sense, good will and good moral character (t = -.793, NSD p<.429), journalists are significantly less likely than practitioners to believe practitioners possess the same qualities (t = 4.935, p<.001).

Journalists are significantly less likely than practitioners to believe practitioners understand journalistic problems such as meetiung deadlines, attracting reader interest and making the best use of space (t = 3.672, p<.001).

Although both journalists and practitioners slightly disagree with the statement "you often can't trust journalists," (t = -.197, NSD p<.844), journalists are

significantly more likely than practitioners to agree that "you often can't trust practitioners" (t = -6.966, p<.001).

Journalists tend to agree slightly that the two groups "carry on a running battle" while practitioners tend to disagree slightly, but not significantly differently than journalists (t = -1.722, NSD p<.087). Journalists are significantly more likely than practitioners to agree that the massiveness of the impact of public relations makes it difficult for the average citizen to know when he is being sold a bill of goods (t = -8.459, p<.001).

Although journalists are slightly less likely, but not significantly so, than practitioners to believe journalists frequently use practices which are not in the public interest (t = 1.595, NSD p<.112), journalists are significantly more likely than practitioners to believe practitioners frequently do not act in the public interest (t = -4.962, p<.001).

In ranking of news value factors perceived important to journalists, t-tests proved significant in three instances at the .001 level. Journalists rated "interest to readers" and "prompt, timely publication" less important than practitioners thought journalists would; journalists ranked "fairness to different views" more important than practitioners thought journalists would (Table 3, Section II).

In ranking of news values perceived important to

practitioners, t-tests proved significant at the .001 level on three items. Practitioners rated "factual accuracy" more important than journalists thought practitioners would but practitioners ranked "prompt, timely publication" and "depicts subject in favorable light" less important than journalists thought practitioners would (Table 3, Section II).

Public relations practitioners were significantly more likely than journalists to disagree that practitioners do not need news reporters or the mass media to help persuade the public to support issues and programs that are vital to the practitioner's client or organization (t = -1.967, p<.049).

Both groups were inclined to agree that, intentionally or not, when the news media use material supplied by public relations practitioners, they are helping the practitioners improve the image of his client or organization (t = .585, NSD p<.558).

Journalists were significantly less likely than practitioners to agree that most news reporters/editors and practitioners develop a good working relationship that in the long run is beneficial to both the news media and the practitioner's client or organization (t = 4.735, p<.001), although both groups agreed overall with the statement (journalists' mean = 5.060, practitioners' mean = 5.983).

Journalists were significantly less likely than

practitioners to disagree that the news professional and practitioner have such fundamentally different goals that it is very difficult for members of the two occupational groups to work together (t = -4.626, p<.001). Likewise, journalists were significantly less likely than practitioners to disagree that cooperation between news media and practitioners is usually detrimental to the public interest (t=-4.228, P<.001).

Practitioners were significantly more likely than journalists to disagree that news media do not give material provided by practitioners the time and space needed to present the publkic with a fair picture of the practitioner's client or organization (t = 4.284, p<.001).

Both groups believe that journalists generally feel that their work is more important to society than public relations and that this belief contributes to some of the antagonism journalists feel toward public relations (t = -.217, NSD p<.828). However, practitioners are significantly more likely than journalists to believe the antagonism many journalists feel toward public relations stems partly from an inflated view those journalists have of their own status (t = 2.372, p<.018).

Both groups agree that -- but practitioners significantly more strongly -- that journalists' stereotypes of public relations practitioners are based on negative experiences with a few "bad apples" (t = 3.566, p<.001).

Both groups agree that practitioners are at least partly to blame for journalists' negative attitudes because practitioners have not eliminated the "bad apples" that give public relations a bad name (t = .864, NSD p<.388).

Both groups agree -- but journalists significantly less so -- that practitioners must bear part of the responsibility for journalists' negative attitudes because practitioners haven't done a very good job of educating journalists about public relations (t = 2.696, p<.008). Both groups agree -- but journalists significantly more so -- that practitioners are partly responsible for journalists' negative attitudes because practitioners are not sufficiently concerned about journalists' needs for clear, concise, accurate information (t = -2.781, p<.006).

Journalist agree, while practitioners disagree, that journalists' negative views are largely justifiable (t = -5.731, p<.001). Practitioners agree, while journalists disagree, that journalists' negative views are not justified by the facts (t = 5.625, p<.001).

Practioners are significantly more likely than journalists to believe that public relations has a strong impact on what news (t = 2.331, p<.021) and the way news (t=.933, p<.035) is presented to the public.

In assessing mass media in general, newspapers and radio-television, both groups believed public relations accounted for between 25 and 50% of news content.

"Newspapers" was the only category of news media in which practitioners reported significantly greater news content accounted for by public relations than journalists reported ($t = 2.389$, $p<.018$).

Discussion

This paper set out to study the relationships between journalists and public relations practitioners. Its purpose is to better understand and eventually measure possible influences of public relations on news gathering and dissemination. It also serves to lay groundwork for future investigations into the effects of public relations on news media content.

Antagonistic, Yet Inter-Dependent

A climate of antagonism between journalists and practitioners was well established in the literature and reinforced by this research. Yet, despite the largely antagonistic, adversarial nature of the inter-relationship between the two professions, journalism and public relations remain largely inter-dependent. This inter-dependency is what makes the relationship so problematic and so fascinating.

The methodology of this thesis to a large degree built upon and even in part replicated earlier studies. This paper generally reinforces the findings of the earlier

studies. Like its predecessors (Aronoff, 1975; Bishop, 1988; Feldman, 1961a, 1961b; Habermann et al., 1988; Jeffers, 1977; Kopenhaver, 1985; Kopenhaver et al., 1984; Ryan & Martinson, 1988) data from attitude measures in this thesis indicate generally negative attitudes toward public relations on the part of the journalists sampled in this research.

Although we anticipated finding a softening of antagonistic attitudes in a geographic growth area for public relations because of the Grunig (1987) study, we regret to report that we did not have that experience. Conflict between journalists and practitioners appears to be consistent in the two geographic areas studied.

Journalists and Practitioners Perceive PR Very Differently

While most public relations practitioners and some journalists acknowledge a positive contribution by public relations to the process of news production, the two groups perceive the role of public relations very differently. The majority of journalists view practitioners as unprofessional manipulators of the news media. While recognizing some "bad apples" have tainted the public relations barrel, practitioners see the services they provide to media in a more beneficial light.

Practitioners also believe they provide services with considerations in keeping with those news values journalists

hold dear. Journalists, on the other hand, perceive practitioners' performance negatively and practitioners' values as far more self-serving than they actually are. All of these findings from this thesis research are consistent with the earlier studies by Feldman (1961a, 1961b), Jeffers (1977), Kopenhaver et al. (1984), Kopenhaver (1985), and Ryan and Martinson (1988). As in Kopenhaver (1985), journalists in this study projected paractitioners' ratings of the news value "depicts subjects in favorable light" as most important to practitioners when in fact it was the least.

However, practitioners in this study were not quite as adept at predicting journalists' news values as in Kopenhaver's. In Kopenhaver's study, practitioners ranked the new value "depicts subject in favorable light" as least important to themselves and journalists. In this study, practitioners projects that "depicts subject in favorable light" was second most important to journalists (and least for themselves) after factual accuracy as most important to journalists and themselves. In this study, practitioners ranked "fairness to different views" as least important to journalists. The "fairness" news value was added to this study as an original item and not measured by Kopenhaver or any of the previous studies.

Two items which did not prove statistically significant at the .05 level in the Jeffers (1977) study, are

significant in this thesis research. In this study, the item measuring cooperation-competition -- "By and large, news reporters/editors do not give material provided by public relations practitioners the time and space needed top present the public with a fair picture of the practitioner's client or organization" -- is significant at $p<.001$. Another item measuring cooperation -- "Public relations practitioners practitioners do not need news reporters or the news media to help persuade the public to support issues and programs that are vital to the practitioner's client or organization" -- is significant at $p<.049$. Four other items from the Jeffers study have similar findings in this one.

This study also supports the findings of Ryan and Martison (1988) that journalists' negative attitudes derive from perceptions of practitioners' poor performance, negative experiences with a "few bad apples," and inflated views journalists have of their own status. While Ryan and Martinson reported a belief on the part of journalists that their work is more important to society than public relations as a cause of the conflict, this study did not find that belief statistiscally significant.

Unlike some of its predecessors, a few responses to individual items in this thesis research appear to be more consistent. Aronoff (1975) found some individual items apparently contradictory. For example, while a majority of journalists (59%) agreed that "public relations and the

press are partners in the dissemination of information," they strongly disagreed (72%) with the statement that "public relations is a profession equal in status to journalism" (Aronoff, 1975, p. 50). This thesis found that journalists disagreed with the first statement (mean = 3.560) as well as the second (mean = 3.202).

Nayman, McKee and Lattimore (1977) found practitioners generally better paid than Colorado journalists and that, given sufficient salary incentive, more than half the journalists would enter public relations. In this study, salary scales were highest for both groups in New York, but practitioners were better paid than journalists. However, about half (43%) the journalists would never consider working in public relations while an equal number (42.5%) would work in PR, but for considerations other than money. Only nine percent of the journalists would work in PR for a salary increase of $10,000 or more.

Who Is Responsible for the Conflict?

Practitioners sampled in this thesis link their conflict with journalists directly with inequality of status. It is possible that practitioners suffer from poor professional self-esteem. Some find it demoralizing to do battle with public relations' poor image every workday. Rusty Sevigny, APR, president of the Miami PRSA chapter, noted recently that four senior South Florida practitioners

independently confided to her in a one-week period that they're considering leaving public relations because of the "stigma" attached to the field (R. Sevigny, personal communication, March 15, 1990).

Journalists, on the other hand, indicate their antagonism stems from generally perceived poor professional performance, a charge that practitioners seem loathe to admit. While willing to concede the existence of a few "bad apples," practitioners would rather assign responsibility for the conflict to journalists' inflated views of the value of journalism to society and journalists' own status. If made to shoulder the blame for the conflict, practitioners indicate they haven't policed their own ranks well enough or they haven't educated journalists about public relations well enough. Practitioners seem more reluctant to admit they caused the conflict by failing to serve journalists adequately.

In an effort to gain ink and air time, it has been established that practitioners continually offer journalists usually unsolicited assistance in the performance of their jobs (Pomerantz, 1990). It is doubtful whether there is any other business in which professional help of this kind is profferred in a similar manner without a price tag.

Gratuitous offerings can in themselves be a source of tensions and resentments. "Givers, whatever their motives, are not always appreciated. To be a receiver implies, to

some a failing or deficiency. Beneficiaries, not infrequently, harbor very mixed feelings about their benefactors" (Pomerantz, 1990, p. 14).

Pomerantz also makes the point that "easy is rejected; hard-to-get is respected" (1990, p. 14). Smothering under the weighty volume of public relations-originated materials, it isn't too surprising that the news media tend to devalue any and all materials from public relations practitioners, as well as the very source of all this largesse.

The Dangers of Prejudice Against Public Relations

Journalists who refuse to use any public relations materials because they don't trust any practitioner, may be failing to report all the news. Practitioners subject to unfair prejudice on the part of mistrustful journalists may feel forced to resort to unethical means of getting their messages to the public. Neither scenario scripted by Kopenhaver et al. (1984, p. 884) serves the best interests of the news media, public relations or society.

Ryan and Martinson (1988) suggest that practitioners need to re-evaluate their professional performance and improve it if indeed they find that journalists' complaints are at all justified. With any failings and shortcomings corrected, practitioners would be in much stronger position to then explain their views to journalists. Further research is needed as to which professional performance

characteristics in particular represent failure on the part of practitioners to serve journalists. Additional research is also needed to identify any other variables affecting journalists' decisions about using public relations materials.

Public Relations: Hand Maiden to a Free Press?

In discussing widely varying opinions regarding the behavior of public relations practitioners, Grunig (1976) notes that practitioners generally view their role as essential to the preservation of open communication in a free society and as a valuable supplement to a free press.

Interestingly, the conflict between public relations practitioners and journalists may be a condition required to guarantee a free press in our free society.

Schabacker (1963, p. 172) found that "the competent, ethically sound public relations practitioner provides an invaluable service to the media gatekeepers and, in turn, to the functioning of our free society." Still, practitioners are looked at with cynical judgement until they have proven their value, credibility and trustworthiness to the media gatekeepers. From the standpoint of the good of our democratic society, Schabacker concluded that some degree of conflict between the news media and the public relations practitioner may be eminently desirable. Because of the ethical and performance problems posed by the "few bad

apples" in public relations, this writer has to agree with Schabacker.

Conflict as Check-and-Balance

Regrettably, not all public relations practitioners act ethically. Not all public relations practitioners act in the interest of the public as well as their client or organization. In the absence of concern for ethics and public interest, a climate of antagonism in which journalists' skepticism is fully operable may be the most effective check-and-balance for public relations.

At the same time, some public relations practitioners do act ethically and in the public interest. The public relations practitioner who does not ever have to deal with journalists and their antagonistic attitudes are rare. For the majority of practitioners, having to live with and accommodate the antagonism on the part of journalists is at best one of the drawbacks of practicing public relations. At worst, the antagonism makes practitioners leave public relations. Practitioners concerned about public relations' poor image work hard with the hope that their good performance will help compensate for the "few bad apples." More research is needed about practitioners' concerns about public relations' poor image and their ideas for solving the problem.

How substantially does public relations contribute to

news media content? Additional research is needed to resolve questions about the extent of the effects of public relations on news media content. The majority of both journalist and practitioner respondents to this thesis indicate they believe as little as 25% and as much as 50% of our news media content is affected by public relations. Only a few respondents indicated they believed the impact was on as little as 10%. Many indicated they believed the impact fell into the 51 to 75% range.

This writer suggests even the range of 25 to 50% estimated as news content affected by public relations is a statistic to be reckoned with. Even with journalists' skepticism as a gate. Even with a climate of conflict surrounding the gatekeeper's decision-making processes that serves as a safeguard for our free and socially responsible press.

Public Relations: Heal Thyself

Perhaps what public relations could use most is a dose of its own good medicine. Perhaps what public relations needs is a public relations program conducted by public relations practitioners for the benefit of public relations as a profession.

Such a public relations program would be a complicated, costly, ambitious undertaking, in no way a "quick fix." The task of unifying the several different professional

organizations serving the field to undertake such an endeavor is in no way simple.

Yet, without it, public relations stands to remain burdened with this quixotic relationship, riddled with conflict, with one of its prime constituencies: the news media.

Without such a program, the antagonism between public relations and journalism will continue, as a sort of perverted necessary evil in which the two parties must tangle before they can tango.

Even worse, without a sound public relations program to heal itself, public relations will continue to founder in the wake of the turbulence of its own poor image. But then, it seems we can say with some certainty that, when it comes to the working relationships between public relations practitioners and the journalists they attempt to serve, it is indeed an imperfect world.

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